agt. of Bo. Finch

45

An Expedient for Peace,

Or ſome Chriſtian and Reaſonable

PROPOSALS,

Once more Renewed and Offered again to

Friends of READING,

Conducing to an Amicable

Compoſure of Differences among them:

WITH

A healing Epiſtle to them from Friends of *BRISTOL*, on both ſides, tenderly adviſing them to meet all together again in their Ancient Publick Meeting Houſe.

AS ALSO

A ſeaſonable Expoſtulation and a perſuaſive to a Reconciliation, with ſome remarkable Teſtimonies added to promote the ſame and ſeveral Objections againſt it Anſwered, which may Tend to a General Service.

Mat. 5. 9. *Bleſſed are the Peace-makers,*
Luke 6. 38. *Forgive and ye ſha l be forgiven.*
Philip. 4. 5. *Let your moderation be known to all Men.*
Theſſ. 5. 13. *Be at peace amongſt your ſelves.*
Rom. 14. 13. *Let us not therefore judg one another any more.*
Eccleſiaſticus 27. 21. *As for a Wound it may be bound up, and after Reviling there may be Reconciliation.*
Charity, ſaid one of the Ancients, *is the whole perfection of a good Man.*

Reading *Sixth Month* 1692.

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE
Friends Reference
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An Introduction *by way of* Preface *to the Enſuing Papers.*

FOR *the uſe of all the truly Moderate and Impartial Friends or profeſſors of the Truth, theſe following Papers are chiefly deſigned, and it is hoped that by ſuch, they will be both ſeriouſly peruſed and gladly received, being in the ſame Univerſal Love and good will towards all (in which they were firſt Written,) are they now publiſhed for a more general good, even for the ſtirring up the Minds of all to be found in that which is more, (or indeed the moſt) excellent way, and that is Fervent Charity, which the Apoſtle* Peter *exhorted the Primitive believers above (before or over) all things to have amongſt themſelves, for (ſaith he) Charity ſhall cover the multitude of Sins.* Pet. 4.8.

I. *It was alſo by the Apoſtle* Paul *preferred as being that in it ſelf which is both (moſt valuable and moſt permanent) before and above all knowledge, Prophecies, Tongues, and other ſpiritual Gifts, for theſe ſhall vaniſh away, but that never faileth. And (ſaith he) though I ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as ſounding braſs or a tinkling Cimbal; And though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and give my Body to be burned, and have not that one neceſſary thing Charity, it profiteth me nothing, for it ſuffereth long, is kind, it envieth not, vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, nor eaſily provoked; and concluding that Chapter, Now (ſaith he) abideth Faith, Hope and Charity, but the greateſt of theſe is Charity; ſo that indeed as one well obſerved, that maketh a Man abſolute and perfect in all other Virtues; for where it is, there is alſo Patience, Meekneſs, Kindneſs, Gentleneſs, Conſtancy, Humility, Faith, Hope, Perſeverance, &c. For it Beareth, Believeth, Hopeth, and Endureth all things.* 1 Cor. 13. 18, &c.

II. *Now all those who are endued with this Divine never failing Virtue, and Live in it, can easily forgive one another, and are far from being irreconcileable, or like those the Apostle spoke of, that were unmerciful, implacable, and without Natural Affection; such are very heard-hearted and revengeful, and who do let the Sun go down on their wrath. And truly if this Charity were but as Predominant amongst all sorts of Religious Societies as possibly a forward and furious Zeal is too prevalent, O how comfortably and sweetly might they all live one with another, and enjoy the benefit of each other, both upon a spiritual and temporal account!*

Rom. 1. 31.

III. *But alas, there is such a Peevish, Churlish, Narrow, Morose, Sullen, Strait and sower Spirit, has got such a place into too many, that unless People be just of this or the other Opinion or Profession, they will not only be ready to look upon them as no Christians, (or at least not so good as themselves) but also not worthy to be Conversed with, in a Neighbourly and Civil Manner, no otherwise than either meer Natural Relation or some private self-end necessarily leads thereunto.*

IV. *And O what sad tearing and ruinating Work? What lamentable Mischief and Havock? What Confusions and distracted doings hath this uncharitable and unchristian-like Temper produced in this and other Nations? as in some places more than in others, many tender-hearted People have seen to their great sorrow All which might have been prevented, had all kept to that Meek, Peaceable, Patient, Condescending and Forgiving Frame of* Spirit, *in which there would have been a Tender Charitable-bearing with, and watching over one another, for Good and not for Evil, and not with an evil Eye, seeking advantage against each other, or improving it to the very utmost too: And there would also have been a provoking one another, not to Wrath, Anger, Revenge, &c. But to Love and good Works, and a laying aside all Malice, all Guile, and all Hypocrisies and Evil-speakings, and nothing done through Strife or Vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each would have esteemed better of, and preferred others before themselves, and doing nothing by Partiality, as is express'd in another place. And before it be, as it should and ought to be, all must come to this, even to bear and to forbear, forgive and forget all injuries offences and provocations, in which as the Ancient* Philosophers *summed up the substance of all their Morality, so there is no*

Heb. 10. 24.

1 Pet. 2. 1.

1 Tim. 5. 21.

true

true Chriſtianity without it, let any profeſs or pretend to what they pleaſe.

V. *And truly very obſervable it is, That of all the Commands in the* New Teſtament, *there is not one ſo frequently repeated, ſo earneſtly recommended, and ſo pathetically exhorted to, by our Lord* Jeſus *and his* Apoſtles, *as that one is,* (viz.) Love one another, *which is at leaſt fourteen or fifteen times, in the very ſame words expreſſed, and indeed next to that intire loving of God with all our hearts,* &c. *it is the chief and moſt principal part of Religion; for our Great Maſter himſelf Determined it, that it was by loving (and not by Hating, Striving, Envying, Quarrelling, Abuſing, Inſulting over, Reflecting upon, or Smiting one another) by which (even by Love) we were, and all are to be known to all Men to be really his Diſciples; and ſo it is indeed as obvious to all on the other hand, that who ever they be that are in Pride, in Enmity, Hatred, Prejudice, Envy, Revenge,* &c. *one againſt another, they are not his follower: Concerning which much more might be enlarged, but I Omit it at preſent, deſigning brevity.*

VI. *Only this further Reader, pray beware of being Tinctur'd with that Evil, Implacable and Uncharitable Spirit, whatever may be the provocations given thee,* &c. *which neither can forgive, nor deſires to be forgiven: Alſo have a care of being influenced by that old, ſour, Phariſaical Leaven of Prejudice or Malice, which too many ſimple, good natur'd, honeſt, harmleſs, well meaning Perſons, have been inſenſibly and unawares, by Converſing with others of a ſtrait, uncharitable temper, drawn into the ſame, and though altogether Ignorant as to matters of difference, (and can give no reaſon why) they yet carry it ſo Shy, Strait, Moroſe,* &c.

VII. *O how this Leaven has diffuſed it ſelf among both Young and Old! And even the very Children we ſee, (not to mention ſome others) are Tinctured with it, as well as thoſe whom they imitate in their Oppoſitions, they do not know for what; nay even the neareſt Relations one to another have ſcarcely eſcaped, but have been and alſo are influenced thereby: So that it hath made (it being joyned with a forward blind Zeal) the greateſt Confuſions and Diſtractions imaginable, both in Chriſtian Societies and Families: For here is Teſtimony againſt Teſtimony, Conſcience againſt Conſcience, Zeal againſt Zeal,* &c. *of which we have had, and would to God we had no ground to*

ſay,

say, that still we have, and dayly almost see too many instances thereof in this place.

VIII. *And now as to the Paper, which contains some things for an Accomodation of Differences among Friends of* Reading *several Years ago, it was drawn up some time after a Friendly Conference was heard by three Friends of each side,* (viz. R. P. *Sen* J. W. A. B. J. K. W. S. *and* RS. *Which was held at* R. P's *House the* 21st. *of the* 10th. *Month* 1686.) *By which some Proposals in order to Friends meeting altogether again in the Ancient Meeting-House were concluded on. But some Particulars refused their Concurrence, and one thing or another (there being an Averseness and Unwillingness in them to it) was unhappily suggested, and as unseasonably (as groundlesly objected) against it, by which the good Intentions, sincere Labours and Endeavours of Friends on both sides, were prevented and obstructed. And to avoid as much as can be in this, any Personal Reflections on any; The chief occasions of the aforesaid Obstructions are here omitted, as likewise what caused, and wherein it was, that the following Papers did meet with much like the same unkind Entertainment and cold Unwelcome Reception from divers that happened either to see or hear of them, is also here on purpose passed by, being loath to Irritate or exasperate any Particulars. However several Ancient Friends to whom they were imparted approved of the same, and some said (and that of no mean Note) that they could set both their Hearts and Hands to what was therein Proposed, as being that which was both Reasonable, Christian and Necessary on all Hands to be performed; being so general too, and yet very comprehensive, that neither the one nor the other can be justly offended or aggravated by it.*

IX. *And had all complied Cordially therewith, it possibly might have prevented much of what hath happened since, as to those things which have widened the* Breach *amongst us, and before ever there be a* Reconciliation *or* Accommodation *of* Matters, *whatsoever else may be done, that which is in the following* Proposals *and healing Letter must not be neglected, but as the first and main thing observed and performed. And being now they are to be made more publick than before, every one that is willing may read them at their own leisure. And so it is left to the faithful witness of God in every ones Conscience, to search and consider thereby how farr they are inclined to close with,*

and

and promote what is ſingly and chiefly aimed at by the ſame, which is at leaſt a better and more Chriſtian like and prudent Accommodation, if not ſuch a Friendly Reconciliation of one to another as ought to be, and which if the advice and Methods herein offered be followed neither the one nor the other will be Impoſſible, nor Impracticable to be accompliſhed. Notwithſtanding (by long continuance and many other unhappy circumſtances, and accidental or Additional Occaſions of Provocations, the more is the pity) that differences amongſt us are now come to ſuch a ſad height.

X. *But if ſo be that neither the one or the other of thoſe be obtained at preſent as is deſired, and the difficulties ſtill remaining ſo great to impede and hinder the ſame from being effected (for indeed as its ſaid and has proved always too true, that a Brother offended is harder to be won than a ſtrong City; and their contentions are like the Bars of a Caſtle) Yet it is hoped that it may be ſerviceable to ſome and help to raiſe up a more charitable and moderate mind in them, and to a more Friendly behaviour, Chriſtian like and amicable deportment one towards another, if not in our religious capacities, at leaſt in our civil concerns, and as loving, courteous and kind Neighbours (and not like* Barbarians *) live together. Friends may alſo ſee by this that there is really a diſpoſition and deſire in ſome towards a peace and Reconciliation again; and it may be obſerved in time on whoſe ſide the fault lies, and who are not inclined nor willing to condeſcend to ſuch fair, equal and Chriſtian Propoſals.* Prov. 18. 19.

XI. *It is likewiſe well known, how many Intricate, Knotty, Troubleſome, and Tedious differences, eſpecially upon a Religious account (for theſe are the worſt of any,) have been at laſt finally determined by the aforeſaid; for when all has been ſaid and done that could be, either by the parties differing and offending each other, or by thoſe to whom it has been referred, as well to reconcile them together as to put an end to the ſame (both which is the great intent and deſign of all references) they behoved to bring it even to this Iſſue at laſt, to wit, to acknowledg, to forgive and forget all on each Hand,* &c.

XII. *And this ſame thing was deſigned not long ago to have been propoſed, by a moderate diſcreet Friend in order to have compoſed a great difference long depending between ſome Friends here. But he was much diſcouraged in it by the Averſeneſs that appeared in one ſide*

more

more than in the other, obſtinately refuſing any compliance therewith.

XIII. We hope there can be none juſtly offended with the publiſhing of this, ſuppoſing thereby that the difference among Friends will be made the more publick; for that is too much already known, what by many Printed Books and Papers of Controverſy, and what by two open diſtinct ſettled Meetings in ſeveral places, and by too many other apparent Tokens of a Diviſion and Separation among us: And there are no ſober judicious and impartial Perſons, but will eſteem it well done in any to propoſe an expedient for Peace, and to endeavour after a Reconciliation or ſome better Accommodation of Matters, and that ſuch do not deſerve to be blamed, but rather to be praiſed, who do undertake the ſame, however deſpiſed and ſlighted they may be, and although at the ſame time may expect to meet with the Frowns and diſpleaſures of ſome, and alſo be expoſed to the harſh Cenſures and Reflections of others, yet the Matter it ſelf, and the Methods therein propoſed however are conſiſtent both with truth, with the Teſtimonies from the Holy Scriptures and with ſound Reaſon.

XIV. And if any others do propoſe better, more feizable, and more rational expedients, and be more effectual than what is here offered, we ſhall be really glad of it, and do deſire that this may be as an encouragement, or an occaſion to incite and ſtir up others more capable ſo to do, and ſo to be concerned herein. And indeed it was hoped that before this time theſe unhappy differences might have been compoſed; but inſtead thereof it is ſad to obſerve how they have rather increaſed than decreaſed, and that Matters are here rather far worſe than better, ſo that there appears now a greater need and neceſſity for a ſpeedy Compliance, with reaſonable Propoſals in order to ſome Reconciliation, or Accommodation, &c. Now Friendly Reader, not to detain thee longer, and to conclude this at preſent, we deſire and beſeech thee to Read what follows, without any prejudice, and in the fear of God ſeriouſly ponder and conſider the ſame, ſo then it may not be undervalued or diſeſteemed by thee.

XV. For notwithſtanding this undertaking of being Peacemakers or Reconcilers we may be raſhly judged by ſome, partial diſaffected perſons, and as fooliſhly diſliked of by others, may be too deeply engaged either by affection or intereſt, and ſo too much prejudiced, whoſe Zeal may far exceed both their Underſtanding and their Charity. Yet it

may

may please Almighty God so to bless it in the Hands of Some Moderate and unbyassed Friends, that in time it may prove successful, and however may be of such service so as to beget some living earnest desires, and ardent longings in the Hearts of many sincere-hearted ones on both sides, and from thence there may be hearty endeavours used according to their Capacities, and in their stations towards the effecting that long desired Reunion and happy Reconciliation, which would be an unspeakable comfort, and Cause of no small rejoycing to us all.

XVI. *And which that the Lord God Everlasting in his infinite Mercy, Goodness and tender Compassion towards us, may be graciously pleased both to grant us, and hasten the time of its accomplishment, and that we may all labour in the mean time to be a People worthy of so great and so unvaluable a Blessing, and singular favour: And let us all (if so be at present we cannot accord in other things) however unite and joyn together in our sincere breathings, and supplications, and with one Heart and Soul mightily cry to the Lord for the same.*

XVII. *And which that it may be really effected, and (by that Divine powerful hand with which nothing is impossible) at last brought to pass amongst us, is that which is both our Hearty and earnest desire, and is likewise the chief aim and end of the publishing the following Papers.*

Reading the 12*th*.
6 *Month*, 1692.

Signed on behalf of himself
and others Concerned,

Abraham Bonifield.

The Copy of a Letter *and a* Paper, *Tending to an Amicable Compoſure of Differences among Friends at* Reading, *&c. Which is as follows.*

The 18th. 9th. Month 87.

Dear Friend,

IT cannot but be a great grief to many of you, as well as with us, that ſo ſad Heats, Animoſities and Diviſions have happen'd among thoſe that were begotten to God by one and the ſame Word of Eternal Power; That ſuch ſhould fall out by the way is indeed Lamentable. Altho' the occaſions taken may be very ſmall, yet the Enemy of all our Souls gets his Advantage, when he draws us into Feuds, and Controverſies, to the neglecting the moſt weighty matter; theſe things greatly tending to the prejudice and hurting of many Tender, Innocent, and well meaning People. And as theſe things have taken too much place in your Town, and partly iſſued hither, ſo it will be well, if you firſt could hit upon a Reconciliation, that the ſame Brotherly Love might again ariſe, which at firſt was among Friends one towards another; where then will the Animoſities be? Surely if all had kept in it, theſe things had never happened. Wherefore I have been willing to ſend thee the Incloſed Copy of a Paper, Written by one who heartily Travels for the Proſperity of the Truth, and the Union and Tranquillity of thoſe that Profeſs it, and ſhall eſteem it well done of thee, if thou approve thereof, and propagate it to others of your Town; Where I hope there are many, either weary of theſe ſad Diſturbances, or at leaſt troubled at them.

If all ſides prove as willing, I hope it will prove as Eaſie, and as Comfortable to you at Reading *to come out of them again, as it has done to our Friends at* Briſtol, *who had long enough tryed the ſad effects of Diviſion: And if this Eſſay ſhould have any of the ſame effect; I make no doubt but it would be to the Glory of God, the Honour of the Truth, and the Comfort of you all, the good Example of others, and much Rejoycing to the Author,* &c.

Here

Here follows the Paper.

Something once more ſoberly offered for an Amicable Compoſure and Accommodation of difference, happened among the Profeſſors of Truth in and about Reading, *and which may be through the Bleſſing of God in order to their Friendly Meeting all together again in the Antient publick Meeting-Houſe, if all parties concerned be Cordially inclined to agree hereunto and comply therewith, which is left for them all to conſider of ſeriouſly, in and with the Precious Light of Chriſt Jeſus.*

WHereas it muſt be acknowledged on both Hands that there has been, and is a ſad Diviſion and Separation unhappily fallen out amongſt the Profeſſors of Truth in the Town of *Reading*, and that which hath partly occaſioned the ſame has greatly proceeded from an unwary managing of Matters, too hot a Zeal, and Indiſcreet Inadvertency; and though poſſibly there might be in the mean time a good intention in divers on both ſides; yet alas! how have the ſparks of contention ariſen to a great flame, which albeit it may ſeem difficult, however we hope it is not impoſſible to be quenched.

I. In order to which it is therefore in the firſt place tenderly propoſed, That it be Heartily and Unanimouſly concluded on by all concerned herein, That it had been more to the Honour of God and renown of his Holy unchangeable Truth, more for our proſperity therein and gathering of others thereunto; had we all kept more in the Word of Gods patience, and in the Lamb like Life, more in Coolneſs and Calmneſs of our Minds and in the ſilence of all Fleſh, than frequently we have done, whereby the Enemy of us all hath often prevailed upon us, to draw us out to thoſe things which were unſeemly and unbecoming our Holy profeſſion, both to the wounding of

our own Souls, and alſo hurting many others, and caſting ſtumbling Blocks before the weak, and whereby the pure Name of the Lord our God has been much Diſhonoured, and his Holy Spirit grieved, the Hearts of the Righteous ſadned, and many ill effects produced.

II. Wherefore in the ſecond place, its neceſſary that a true godly Sorrow ſeize upon every Soul for theſe things that ever it ſhould have ſo happened among us, and a Holy firm Reſolution through Divine Aſſiſtance never to be found therein again; having ſufficiently learned by this time through a ſerious review and impartial Obſervation of preceeding paſſages, to be more wiſe and careful, more circumſpect, watchful and moderate for time to come, ſo as to endeavour to amend what has been amiſs in every one of our own particulars, hoping hereby, that our moſt merciful tender, hearted Father will be graciouſly pleaſed freely to remit what is paſt, which hath offended him, and favourably Countenance us, when aſſembled together again, with the Glory and ſweet Senſe of his Bleſſed preſence, than which nothing is more excellent or deſirable.

III. And that as we know right well he hath been, and is ready upon a true returning to him with the whole Heart, to pardon and blot out many tranſgreſſions committed againſt his Divine Majeſty, ſo we truly deſire to be of the ſame Mind as our Bleſſed Head was of, to overcome all evil with good, heartily forgiving each other their Treſpaſses againſt us, as we pray to be forgiven our ſelves; putting on every one of us (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, longſuffering, forbearing and forgiving one another; as the Apoſtle ſaid even to the Chriſtian *Coloſſians*, if any Man have a quarrel (or complaint) againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do you. And above all things, put on Charity (the moſt excellent of all gifts) which is the Bond of perfectneſs: And let the Love of God rule in your Hearts, to which alſo you are called in one body, *&c.*

Coloſ. 3. 13, 14.

IV. And whatever imprudent miſcarriages, Weakneſs, Frailties, Infirmities, and unfriendly behaviours have been obſerved

obſerved one towards another, either in our uncharitable apprehenſions, unadviſed ſayings, or actions, and whatever unſavory Reflections, Provocations and Aggravations have been given by any when formerly together, or ſince aſunder, we ſincerely and heartily deſire (in order to a Cordial uniting, and amicable Meeting altogether again in the ancient publick Meeting-Houſe) That all theſe things aforeſaid and whatever elſe has cauſed this unhappy Separation, may be forever buried in the Grave of Everlaſting Oblivion (according to the tender Councel and Chriſtian Practice of our Friends of *Briſtol*) and never to be remembred any more, or any to be upbraided therewith publickly, or privately for time to come.

V. Whereby it may be hoped, that in time all theſe former or preſent Diſtances, Prejudices, Animoſities, Shineſs, and Straitneſs, with all kind of Antipathy, Harſhneſs or Enmity, and the very ground, or root from whence they have ſprung, may come to an end, and be totally Extirpated; and in the room thereof, that Brotherly Love, that Chriſtian Friendſhip, and Condeſcention, that ſweet Society, laſting Amity and Sympathy, in the antient Life, and Love of Truth may revive again; and that Heavenly Concord and Harmony, that deſirable agreement and unity of Spirit, and oneneſs of Heart Soul and Mind in the Bleſſed Seed may over all take place, appear and prevail amongſt us; that the Bond of Peace may forever be kept inviolable, and nothing ever able to break it again, and ſo Truth, and Righteouſneſs, Mercy and Peace, may flow as a mighty River in and amongſt us, to our great mutual Joy, and rejoycing of the Hearts of all the faithful, and to the wiping away that reproach which hath been caſt upon our Holy undefiled Religion.

VI. That it may be ſeen that there is a God in *Iſrael*, and that there is a reſtorer of paths, and a healer of breaches amongſt us, even he who is the great Reconciler of differences, by whoſe reconciling, Peace-making Word of Life, when Enemies to God and ſtrangers one to another, we were brought near to him and into a Spiritual Relation; whoſe Infinite Divine Power, which thus ſo graciouſly viſited us, doubtleſs is as able (we muſt all acknowledg) as ever, to Reconcile and unite us again, and make us as near, and dear one to another

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as ever; yea, and more than ever before; and that it yet may be known to all, we ſtill retain that infallible Chriſtian Token and moſt certain Demonſtrative Character of being the Diſciples of Jeſus, through that tender unfeigned love which he hath begotten in our Hearts, and declares it ſelf in bearing one with another, praying for, and forgiving each other.

VII. And that as there is now ſuch an Univerſal Calm and toleration in the Nations, as to outward Diſturbations; ſo we all may partake of the benefit thereof together; and that this Town may no longer be the only differing place from all others, but that for time to come we may meet all together in the Antient tender Love of God, meekly, and quietly, we all endeavouring that all occaſions of publick differences as much as in us lies may be avoided on all Hands for time to come; and that as we would not that the truly Conſcientious on the one Hand ſhould be oppoſed, or obſtructed, from doing thoſe things that they believe are their Chriſtian duty; ſo one the other Hand the tenderly ſcrupulous ſhould not be Impoſed on or Compelled to act beyond their own underſtandings or Convictions, or conform to any thing they are not clear nor free in their own Minds, ſo to do in Matters purely Conſcientious. And thus an equal liberty is allowed to both, and which all Chriſtians ought to grant one to another. For as one well ſaid, none but God alone hath power to impoſe a Law upon the Conſcience of any Man to which it ought to be ſubject as obliging by it ſelf. This Concluſion is proved by the words of the Apoſtle, There is but one Lawgiver who can both ſave and deſtroy; There is nothing (ſaid another) in the Primitive Church deſerves greater Imitation than in that admirable Temper, Moderation, [illegible] and Condeſcention, which was uſed in it, towards all the Members of it. And to ſeparate Goodneſs and Mercy from God, Compaſſion, and Charity from Religion, is to make the two beſt things in the World (God and Religion) good for nothing, *&c.*

VIII. What is aforeſaid propoſed, is judged very proper and neceſſary expedients, in order to a Friendly agreement and Compoſure of differences amongſt the Friends of *Reading*, even by a mutual acknowledgment one to another, and forgiving

ing each other, and ſome body muſt begin this good work. God Almighty grant that this honeſt, ſincere undertaking in propoſing theſe things in the Univerſal Love of God, in true and tender good-will to all, may be Proſperous and Succeſsful, and have its deſired effects; That over all, and in and by us all, he may be livingly Worſhipped, Served and Reverenced, according to his own appointed Way, and in the Divine Order of his own Ordaining. *Bleſſed and Magnified be his Holy Name for ever and ever.*

25th. of the 8th. Month, 1687.

Hereunto is alſo Annexed the Copy of a very tender, healing Epiſtle, from ſome of the moſt Eminent Friends of Briſtol *of both ſides; and Directed to ſeveral Friends of* Reading *alſo, of both Meetings, which contains good Chriſtian Counſel, and ſeaſonable Advice, and doth well agree with the aforeſaid: And is as followeth.*

Briſtol the 5th. of the 1ſt Month 168$\frac{6}{7}$.

Thomas Curtice	*Robert Sandilands*
William Lambol	*Robert Payne*
Leonard Key	*John Kent, John Bur,*
Abraham Bonnifield	*Benjamine Coale,* &c.

Dear Friends,

WE dearly and heartily ſalute you, in that Ancient Love of God, which did at firſt reach unto us, and gathered us to be a People, and which hath often refreſhed our Souls and Spirits to our great Conſolation and Joy in the Lord, and one in another.

It having pleaſed the Lord, to take away the cruel hand of the Informers and other ſufferings, that have of late attended us in this City, and our Meeting-Houſes being again delivered up to us, it came into our Hearts, and we believe from the Motion of the Spirit of the Lord in us joyntly, (notwithſtanding

ſtanding ſome miſunderſtandings and differences had happened amongſt us) to meet and continue together in the Worſhip of God as in former times, in and through which we have found great refreſhment and ſatisfaction ; for by our mutual endeavours to bury the extreams that offen'd each other, we feel the antient love to ariſe the more, which brings us nearer unto each other, wherein we rejoyce and have great Conſolation ; and from thence ariſes the ſame true and antient love unto you, with prayers unto the Lord and deſires unto you, that the ſame endeavours, may be amongſt you, that in the Grave of Oblivion, all that hath been hurtful may be buried and utterly forgotten, that ſo as one Family you may again meet together in your antient love and place as formerly ; then will certainly the true love more and more ariſe, and the hope and faith that will remove Mountains, and the peaceable Saviour be more rejoyced in, that leads through and over all that which doth offend, into Brotherly kindneſs and forgiveneſs one unto another, wherein you may be one anothers joy and rejoycing in the Lord. May the Lord ſo tender all our Hearts and lead you and us, in the ſame path, are the Prayers and deſires of your

Dear Friends and Brethren,

We ſend this by our Dear Friend *John Oſgood*, whom we have deſired to communicate this to you.

Thomas Gouldney *Charles Joanes*
Richard Snead *Cornelius Sarjant*
Charles Hartford *William Ford*
Thomas Callowhill *Thomas Jordan*
John Love *William Smith.*

A Friendly Perſwaſive to Peace; or ſomething by way of an Earneſt and Seaſonable Expoſtulation, with Friends of *Reading* on both ſides to be reconciled to one another, and to lay aſide all Heats, Prejudices, Animoſities, *&c.* with divers Remarkable Teſtimonies, collected to promote the ſame; and ſome Objections anſwered, which may tend to a general ſervice.

SECT. I.

Contains ſeveral weighty Motives, ſhewing the great need and neceſſity of Reconciliation, &c.

I. AS concerning the Propoſals for an Accommodation, or Compoſure of Differences, *&c.* ſomething already has been ſaid in the Introduction: Now, as touching the aforeſaid tender and healing Epiſtle from *Briſtol*, ſome Friends on both ſides may remember, That is was carefully delivered to them by our dear Friend *John Oſgood*, who, after having imparted it to ſeveral, he alſo uſed his utmoſt endeavours, by perſwading them to a Complyance with what was therein recommended, and afterwards divers other Friends had the ſight and peruſal of it.

II. But alas it appears too plainly, that it was not ſo tenderly regarded, at leaſt not Anſwered, ſo as ought to have been.

And indeed ſeeing that to this very day the deſired effects thereof are not yet produced, muſt it not be concluded, that there was both a great neglect and remiſsneſs ſomewhere, and the wholeſom Councel and Chriſtian good advice therein given to Friends, was neither followed nor favourably intertained ſo as to be practiſed? Now Friends its left to every one, both ſeriouſly to conſider, and alſo ſoberly to reflect upon themſelves whoever they be, that find they are particularly concerned herein, and were really the chief cauſe or occaſion thereof.

III. However it is hoped that it is not as yet too late to amend what has been amiſs in this or any other reſpect, and to take an impartial and ponderous review of the abovementioned, ſo as to endeavour to recover (whilſt there is yet a time and opportunity afforded,) what has been loſt either through careleſſneſs or unwillingneſs, which ſurely would not appear half ſo difficult nor uneaſie, as may ſeem to ſome, if but once the manly part, or that ſelfiſh conceited revengeful-like part (where any thing of it is yet alive in any,) were laid aſide and ſubdued, and the holy precious Croſs truly taken up to all Peeviſh and Stubborn Wills, harſh and ſower Inclinations, cunning crafty Reaſonings and Conſultations with Fleſh and Blood, and to that untoward Diſpoſition of too much juſtifying every one themſelves, and as much Judging, and too ſeverely Condemning others (an Epidemical Diſtemper, which Mankind is too generally and naturally Incident to;) And if that even, ſweet, moderate Temper, Peaceable, Lowly and Charitable Frame of Spirit, might once ſo prevail, and appear in all, ſo as to remove all all kind of Perſonal Prejudices, Private Enmity, Revenge or Hatred.

IV. Then certainly would not all be as hearty, and deſirous after a Reconciliation, Peace and Friendſhip one with another, again as ever formerly, they might be Eager, Earneſt, and Hot after Contention, Variance, Diſſention and Separation from one another? neither then would they be content or at quiet, till the ſame ſhould be brought to paſs, or at leaſt they had uſed their utmoſt endeavours for a re-uniting and bringing all together again; and it is but what the Lord both requires

and

and expects, of every one so to do, according to their Power and Capacities.

V. That so the World and our Enemies on all hands, may no longer reproach us, and say we are become such enemies one to another, that it seems impossible that we will ever agree, or be Friends together again; and that we are of all People, the worst to be Reconciled, or that there is not a wise Man amongst us to Compose our Differences, or else if there be, that we are very ill-natur'd, and wholly averse to comply to any Christian and reasonable Terms, and hear of no kind of Expedient for a Reconciliation, nor yield to any equal Proposals that would tend to a better Accommodation of Matters; and that it appears, some do delight more in a separation and being divided asunder, than to dwell and meet altogether again, as Brethren of one Heavenly Father, and belonging all to one Family in true Love and Friendship.

VI. O Friends, is not the one, that is, the former, as comely and as amiable a sight as can be seen amongst the Children of Men, as its expressed very fully and excellently in the 133 *Psalm.* 1, 2, 3. *vers. Behold* (saith he) *How good, and how pleasant it is for Brethren to Dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head that ran down upon the Beard, even* Aarons *Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments as the dew of* Hermon, *and as the dew that descended upon the Mountains of Sion, for there the Lord commanded the Blessing, even life for evermore.*

VII. And indeed as here is great blessing that attends Unity and Concord, so the contrary must needs accompany Discord, Disunity, *&c.* and which is very Unpleasant, Uncomfortable, and Uncomely: And as it is highly Offensive and a great evil before the Lord, so it is a great, and may prove a fatal stumbling-block to many, and a cause of sad reproach to see a People all own the same Principles of Religion, all under the same Profession and Denomination, and yet cannot agree nor meet in one and the same place together as Friends and Brethren.

VIII. Doth not this occasion some to take up that complaint which *David* did in his time, *Wo is me* (saith he) *that I sojourn in* Mesech, *that I dwell in the Tents of* Kedar, *my Soul* *Psal.* 120. *v.* 5, 6, 7.

hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace; I am for Peace, but when I ſpeak they are for War. O Friends what true quietneſs, Peace or ſatisfaction can thoſe enjoy, or beſpeak to themſelves, who have been or are the chief cauſe of this unhappy Separation, and do obſtruct it ſtill from being otherways, and do hinder an amicable Compoſure of differences, being of ſuch a rigorous ſevere Temper, that they are for exacting to the very utmoſt Farthing?

IX. Friends Remember and practice the Apoſtles good advice and caution; *Recompence* (ſays he) *to no Man evil for evil, but overcome evil with good; and avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath.* Is not this one of the hardeſt Leſſons that can be learned by too many, eſpecially ſuch in whom Pride or paſſion prevails? And if the profeſſors of Chriſtianity were but once brought to take up their Croſs, to deny themſelves in this one thing, *viz.* Revenge (whether by Tongue or Hand, or other ways, as there are too many ways, ſome more ſecret, others more open whereby Revenge is ſhewen) which is a neceſſary and material point of true Religion, as to the practical part thereof; O how ſoon then would there be an end put to all the Heats, Broils, Conteſts, Animoſities, *&c.* which abound amongſt them, and how eaſily then might they be Reconciled, to and at Peace one with another? For the aforeſaid excludes all manner of Revengeful Retaliations, Reflections, or Exaſperations towards any, friends or foes; and if we be adviſed as we are in another place, *Ja.* 4. 11. *not ſo much as to ſpeak evil one of another*, much leſs to do evil one to another. And in *Zach.* 7. 9. *Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of Hoſts, ſaying, Execute true Judgment, and ſhew mercy and compaſſion every Man to his Brother. And oppreſs not the Widow, nor the Poor, and let none of you Imagine evil in his Heart againſt his Brother.* Read the 11, 12, 13. *verſ.* the ſore Judgment that came upon them for their refuſing to harken, and did not do as above mentioned.

Rom. 12. 17. and 19. 20.

X. Surely, to be implacable is far from being like unto Children in malice, as we are Counſelled to be ſo innocent and harmleſs as they are; for we know that though they do ſometimes quarrel together (and that about meer trifles too) yet they are as ſoon pacified and made friends again, it being contrary

1 Cor. 14. 20.

trary to their natures to retain long their wrath, or anger one towards another, as it is ſo with ſome good natur'd perſons, (that it is more like to Men in Malice that are very rough, hard-hearted, difficult to be reconciled ever again) and Children in underſtanding; and quite contrary to what the Apoſtle exhorts, to *let all Bitterneſs and Wrath, and Anger and Clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from you; and be ye kind one to another, and tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt his ſake hath forgiven you.* Eph 31.32.

XI. But we fear there are thoſe who are ſo implacable, that they will rather forfeit, or run the hazard of loſing forgiveneſs from God to themſelves, than to forgive others; and indeed an unforgiving is a ſad Sign of an unforgiven perſon: O how hard may it go with many ſuch, if the Lord ſhould anſwer them according to what ſometimes they may verbally pray, and in a formal manner repeat theſe words oftentimes, and yet never receive any benefit by them, *viz. forgive us our Sins as we forgive them that Sin againſt us*; Let ſuch read *Mat.* 6. 14, 15. *v.* ſaith Chriſt, *for if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes:* And in another place he ſaith, *Shouldſt not thou alſo have had Compaſſion on thy follow ſervant, even as I had pity upon thee, and his Lord was Wrath,* &c. *ſo likewiſe ſhall my Heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not for every one their Treſpaſſes*; read *Mat.* 18. from the 23d. to the end.

XII. Well Friends, its a heavy Judgment for any Perſon or People to be given up to an Irreconcilable and Implacable Spirit of Revenge and Malice; they themſelves at laſt will have the worſt by it. And the Lord may, and its the firm Faith of many, that he will certainly in his own time, and according to his infinite Wiſdom, find out ſome other way (if there be ſtill an obſtinacy, ſtifneſs and unwillingneſs,) to comply with, & purſue ſuch Chriſtian & Prudent Methods, as ought to be complyed with, in order to a happy Reconciliation, Union and Friendſhip,) by which he will bring and Unite together the ſincere, honeſt and ſimple-hearted on both ſides, (who are Innocent in their minds

minds to the Lord, and have no by-end, private intereſt or deſign, nor prejudice in their hearts towards any) into true Love, Peace and Concord: And as for thoſe who do continue ſtiff, ſtout, and high-minded, will not in the leaſt yield, nor by no means be brought to be of a flexible, condeſcending, tender frame of Spirit one to another, but ſay as the proud *Phariſee*, *I am not as this Publican*, or like to thoſe of Old, which ſaid, *ſtand by thy ſelf (or further off) Come not too near me for I am holier than thou*, &c. let them beware leſt it befal them as it did thoſe that even their Sacrifice became as *Smoak in the* Iſa. 65.5. *Noſtrils of the Lord, and he abhorred their offerings*; and as they do delight themſelves in a ſeparation (and at a diſtance one from another, and reckon it better to be ſo than together) that he be not at laſt provok'd to ſeparate and remove from them his bleſſed Preſence; for though he waits and bears long, yet he will not always do ſo, but his long-ſuffering, patience and forbearance, will come to an end to all who abuſe the ſame.

XIII. It is ſaid in *Prov.* 13. 10. *That only by Pride cometh Contention*; This I conceive muſt be meant a Spiritual ſort of Pride, eſpecially being attended (as for moſt part it is) with vain-glory, ſtrong ſelf-will and conceitedneſs, which with Singularity, Flattery and Hypocriſie, its Concomitants, have been, and are the very Spring of all Diſtraction, and the great underminers of Peace, Concord and Quietneſs; the very chief make-bates, and occaſions of Diſſention, Strife, and Contention in all Societies. Hereunto alſo may be added thoſe buſie-bodies, back-biters, tale-bearers and whiſperers, who run up and down from Houſe to Houſe (as ſome have been obſerved) who have made a long Practice of it, under the pretence of Friendſhip, to both hear and tell ſtories of one another, whom they or their Friens do diſſaffect. They were not amiſs compared by one to a ſort of *Hawkers* of groundleſs Reports, which they take in groſs, and afterwards retail them out in Companies: It ought to be the care of every good and wiſe Man to have them ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanced, for they are mortal enemies to all Peace and Reconciliation, Love and Friendſhip, and ſuch are the *Whiſperer and double-tongu'd*, as in *Eccleſ.* 28. 14. it is ſaid, have deſtroyed many that were at Peace, &c. Theſe have been and are the main Fomenters and

the

the chief Incendiaries of Breaches, Diviſions, Heats, Animoſities, differences both in City and Country, *&c.* Concerning which more at large, ſee *William Shewer's* little Book, containing a plain Teſtimony againſt *Back-biters*, *Tale-bearers*, *&c.* Its well worth every ones reading, *&c.*

XIV. And wherefore was it that the Lord took no notice of thoſe when they faſted, and afflicted their Souls? *Becauſe they faſted for ſtrife and debate, and ſmote with the fiſt of wickedneſs, and hid their Face from their own Fleſh*; ſee *Iſa.* 58. 3, 4. But on the other Hand we may find how well pleaſing and acceptable were thoſe prayers, which were offered up with one accord, as in *Acts* 41. 24. And ſee the benefit of it, *verſ.* 31. And in *Chap.* 2. 46, and 47. Its ſaid, *They continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe, did eat their Meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of Heart, praiſing God and having favour with all the People.*

XV. And does not our Lord Jeſus prefer Reconciliation of one Brother to another (where there is a difference or ought between them) before Sacrifice, by laying a poſitive prohibition thereon, with as ſtrict a Command, as in *Mat.* 5. 24. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remember, that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee; Leave thy gift and go, firſt be Reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer it*: How little is this rightly minded or duly practiſed by many, who cannot but remember the ſame? And though it is as true that we ſee one Brother hath ought againſt an another, and both muſt needs remember it, yet its very ſtrange that they both continue ſtill offering, and bringinging their gifts and not mind firſt the chief and main thing, *viz.* of being firſt reconciled one to another, which as then their gifts would be more acceptable to God, being according to his Divine Order and Command, ſo would it be more ſerviceable and profitable to others, and alſo much more comfortable to themſelves than can be whilſt unreconciled one to another.

XVI. Now that there is too much here in this Place of ought one againſt another, is too apparent by the open ſeparation and diviſion amongſt us: But however one is apt to excuſe himſelf, and ſo another the like; and one thinks he may as ſafely offer

offer or bring his gift to the Altar, as well as another; and thus it goes, and ſo from year to year, the poſitive Command of Chriſt is diſpenſed with, and Unity and a Reconcilement wholly neglected; and its to be feared that ſome are become ſo unconcerned in it, and careleſs of it, that its even but as an indifferent thing to them (nay and not only ſo) but the contrary is become cuſtomary to them, that they neither deſire after, nor much care for a Reconciliation.

XVII. But they ſhould conſider, that as Unity, *&c.* is their duty to labour after, ſo it is the Glory, Strength, and Beauty of Chriſtian Societies: It was demanded once of *Ageſlaus*, why the *Lacedemonians* had no Walls to their City? He anſwered, that the Concord of the Citizens was the ſtrength of the City. It alſo reported of them, that when they made their Supplications to their Idol God, ſome asked for Rain, and others for fair Weather: The Oracle returns them this anſwerd; that they ſhould firſt go and agree amongſt themſelves. *Alexander Severus* finding two Chriſtians contending with one another, commmanded them that they ſhould not preſume to take the name of Chriſt upon them any longer; for (ſaith he) you greatly diſhonour your Maſter, whoſe Diſciples you profeſs to be. When there were Commotions in *Cæſars* Army, the very name of *Quirites* huſht them. Oh ſhall not that Reverence we all ought to bear to that Holy Name, which we profeſs, Huſh, or Compoſe our Religious Commotions or Differences amongſt us?

XVIII. The *Mahometans*, as one ſaith, live in ſuch Exemplary Concord, that they ſeldon break out into ill language; but if they do, a third Man will reprove him with a *fie Muſſelman*, fall out! And all is appeaſed. Were it not to be wiſhed that the *Mahometans* were Chriſtians, and in this Chriſtians were *Mahometans*? To ſee an *Egyptian* ſmiting an *Iſraelite*, is no ſtrange ſight; but to ſee one *Iſraelite* quarrelling with another, is moſt unnatural and uncomely. The nearer the Relation, the ſtronger the Affection ought to be.

XIX. Remember the tragical diſmal Hiſtory of poor *Jeruſalem*; its very Animoſities and Diviſions proved at laſt its fatal ruin; for it was not only (as obſerved particularly by ſome) a certain ſign of ruin to the *Jews*: But one infallible cauſe

cauſe of it was, that while they were beſieged by the *Romans*, inſtead of conſulting together the Methods of their common defence, they were broke into ſuch Irreconcileable feuds, that no ſooner had they a time of breathing given them by their beſiegers, but they fell one upon another; ſo that they became their own moſt implacable Enemies: And ſo it has happened to many in this and former Ages, as by manifold ſad experiences hath been known; and to obſerve ſuch Envy, Prejudice, ſuch Animoſities, Heats, *&c.* one to another amongſt thoſe who profeſs to be followers of him, whoſe Doctrin and example was ſo full of Love, Meekneſs, Forgiveneſs, Compaſſion, is it not a ſcandal to the *Jews*, an Opprobrium to the *Gentiles*, and an inlet to Atheiſm and Infidelity?

XX. And as the Apoſtle *James* tells us, where Envying and ſtrife is, there is (not only) Confuſion, (which is bad enough if there were no more) but every evil work: This is indeed very Comprehenſive: There are not only two or three, but a whole complex or ſyſtem of evil works always attends Strife, Envy, *&c.* wherever the ſame is given place to amongſt any ſort of People; and we find that ſome were ready even to glory in their bitter Envyings and ſtrife which they had in their Hearts one againſt another, and not only ſo but to lie againſt the Truth: And in their Zeal and Wiſdom concluded the ſame to be conſiſtent therewith. *But this Wiſdom* (ſaith he) *deſcended not from above, but is Earthly, Senſual, and Develiſh; and who is a wiſe Man endured with knowledg among you?* How ſhall ſuch a one be known by this, *let him ſhew out of a good Converſation, his works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom*, even from *that which is from above, and that is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits*, (and obſerve) *and without partiality and without Hypocriſie.* Here we may all ſee who is truly the wiſe Man, and both the Earthly and the Heavenly Wiſdom, with the proper effects each produceth; and if we judg the Cauſe by the effects, its eaſily ſeen, which of the two is predominant. *Ja.* 3. 16, 20. *James* 3. 14, 15.

XXI. And in the next Chapter of the ſame Epiſtle, he begins with a Querie, *from whence comes Wars and Fightings*

amongſt you (what, even them whom he calls Brethren) *come they not hence?* This is his Anſwer, *even of your Luſts, that War in your Members.* Is it not from Ambition, Covetouſneſs, a greedy deſire after preheminence, who ſhall be greateſt and higheſt, and carry the biggeſt ſway, and is not that one of the chief cauſes of moſt of all Quarrels, Broils, Contentions and Animoſities? Therefore its ſaid in the 5, 11, 12, *Verſes, Do ye think that the Scripture ſaith in vain, the ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy? ſpeak not evil one of another Brethren, he that ſpeaketh evil of his Brother, and judgeth his Brother, ſpeaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law; and there is one Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and deſtroy. Who art thou that judgeſt another,* or as *Paul* has it in Rom. 14. 4. *another Man's Servant? to his own Maſter, he ſtandeth or falleth; yea he ſhall be holden up, however harſhly or uncharitably he may be cenſured and judged, for God is able to make him ſtand*; let us not therefore judge one another any more.

XXII. We are as much cautioned and prohibited not to walk in ſtrife and envying, as in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, *&c.* the former being as well counted the Works of Darkneſs as the latter, in *Rom.* 13. 13. And the Apoſtle we alſo find, reckons amongſt the reſt of the Works of the Fleſh, Envyings, Hatred, Variance, Wrath and Strife; and though theſe be different names, yet may be all ſummed up in one great Evil, expreſſed by the word Enmity or Prejudice; and theſe four are ſo linked together, that one of them cannot be without the reſt; as where Envying is, there is Hatred, *&c.* there is no other particular Work of the Fleſh ſo expreſſed with ſo many words to aggravate the ſame as this, of Envy or Strife; and when we are exhorted to follow Peace with all Men, at the ſame time, in the next *verſe* it's added, *looking diligently, leſt any Root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble you.* Its obſervable how much, or moſtly, indeed, the Apoſtle places the Fruit of the Spirit in theſe Heavenly and Excellent Virtues, which are moſt directly oppoſite to the aforementioned Works of the Fleſh, as Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Meekneſs, Temperance, theſe are all he mentions (except Faith) as the Fruit of the Spirit; and though they alſo be expreſſed by divers Characters, yet as they proceed from one Spirit, ſo they all tend to one and the ſame thing, and which the word Charity may comprehend them all.

XXIII. We

XXIII. We find that very early, even Christ's own Disciples began to strive together by the way, and it was about, Who should be greatest too, as in *Luke* 9.46. And it was from their Carnal reasoning that this Ambition proceeded; upon which Jesus took a Child and set him by him, by which they might learn how Innocent and Humble and Little they ought to be. And in *Mat.* 20. 23. Its said, they were moved, *viz.* (ten of the Disciples) against their Brethren. *But Jesus called them unto him and said, ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you,* (and O that it had never been so upon no account amongst any who have professed to be his Disciples, *&c.*) *But whosoever will be great amongst you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be Ministred unto, but to Minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for many.*

XXIV. And all such who are found guilty of the pride of Life, of Envy, Hatred, *&c.* and are of a bitter sower Spirit, and do not repent of it, will as undoubtedly be excluded, and shut out of the Kingdom of God, as those who live and dye in other gross extravagancies; *for Wrath killeth the foolish Man, and Envy slayeth the silly one,* and as Christ told them plainly in his time, who (its like) conceited themselves to be great Saints, as with respect to those upon whom the Tower of *Siloe* fell, *Think ye* (saith he) *that they were sinners above all the Men that dwell in* Jerusalem? *I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish:* And this same he told others over again in the foregoing *verse*; let us all therefore beware of Envying, or as the Apostle *James* saith, *Grudge not one against another, Brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the Judg standeth before the Door.*

Job 5. 2.

Luke 13. 4.

XXV. And let us neither be of such a hot uncharitable temper, to call for Fire, or to command it (if we could as *Elias* did) to come down, no not though from Heaven it self to prejudice or hurt any, which far better Men than we are, or are now in being, were not allowed to do; yea, though they had power to work Miracles, yet no liberty granted them to dedestroy or consume any by them: No, not even those who

Luke 9.54.

would not receive Christ himself; and for their but very desiring such a thing in their warm Zeal, we see he rebuked them, and with a pretty smart kind of reprehension said to them, *ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them.* Now though its true this is as good and as strong an Argument as can be used, against Persecution, yet it is not improper altogether here to be alledged also against a Furious, Fierce, Passionate, Violent, and indiscreet Zeal, Unchristian, and Unwarrantable Imposition of Matters of Faith, which too often has appeared and been manifested upon a Spiritual account, in more secret and specious-like manner, as in Envying, Striving, Opposing, Rashly Judging, and Condemning (Yea, and in Revenging too) one another.

XXVI. Neither let us be like to those in the same Chapter above cited, who were ready to grudg and complain against one, whom they saw casting out Devils; and tho' it was a very good work and done also in Christ's Name too, yet they were so Zealously set against him, that it is said they forbad him; and why? (not that he did not do it in the name of Christ, for they granted that) but because (said they) he followeth not with us. But hear what Jesus said, *Forbid him not; for* (Mark) *he that is not against us, is for us, or on our part*; as *Mark* has it in Chap 9. 39. Christ looked on them all that were not against his interest in the main, as one party, tho' others would seem to have rendered as two distinct parties.

XXVII. But rather Friends, let us all be of that generous, noble, and publick Spirit as *Moses* was of, when he was told that two others, *viz. Eldad and Medad who were in the Camp, Propheſied as well as the 70 Elders that went into the Tabernacle, and said, my Lord Moses forbid them.* But his answer was, *Envieſt thou for my sake?* (Here was envy upon a specious like pretence) *would God* (saith he) *That all the Lords People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.* And also we find the Apostle *Paul* was of the same noble excellent mind, who was glad that Christ was preached, tho' it is as true that some (as he says) preached him even of Envy, and strife, and some also of good will, not sincerely supposing to add to his Bonds.

Numb. 11. 27.

Philip. 1. 18.

Bonds. (Its like ſome may be ready to ſay) That ſurely *Paul* had good reaſon rather to be offended; with ſuch envious and contentious ſort of Preachers, and that tho' they preached the truth, which was Chriſt, yet he might well have oppoſed or withſtood them, but he was not of ſuch a hot Temper, though he gave them not place by ſubjection neither, as to ſome other more private concerns, but was kept however out of both extreams in moderation. What then (ſays he)? Notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Chriſt is preached, and therein do I rejoyce, yea, I will rejoyce.

XXVIII. Therefore Friends, pray let that compaſſionate Temper, moderate, and moſt excellent Chriſtian Vertue of Charity, not only be pretended to, or much talkt of, as (too many do) but really ſeen and practically demonſtrated by its Fruits, that we are indeed indued therewith, and that in Forgiving, Embracing, and receiving one another as Brethren, who do agree in the main and ſubſtantial Points and Principles of Truth, and wherein we differ in our Judgment of ſome things which are but Externals and Circumſtantials; let us not however continue ſtill falling out by the Way about the ſame, for why ſhould we do ſo, being as tender-hearted *Joſeph*, who ſaid to his Brethren, and ſo treated them as ſuch with great Compaſſion and Affection, notwithſtanding they had greatly abuſed him, *See that ye fall not out by the way*. And ſeeing we are Brethren (or ought ſo to be, and accounted as ſuch, however ſlighted, undervalued, and deſpiſed by one another) why ſhould we contend and quarrel? We muſt all conclude its of the Enemy, and his work firſt to ſcatter and divide us, and to lead into Separation, Diviſion, and Contention, and then the more both to weaken and rule over us. Gen. 45. 24.

XXIX. And we find how early the Enemy begat differences; even in *Abels* time he raiſed up a Spirit of Enmity and Envy in the Heart of *Cain* againſt his Brother; and in *Abrahams* time he, endeavoured to cauſe a Separation and Contention between him and his Brother *Lot*: But if we do walk in the Steps of that faithful Patriarch, we would be as careful as he was to prevent our Adverſary, that ſows Diſcord amongſt Brethren; and we have the ſame reaſon to urge in the Caſe as

he

he had, and the ſame Argument to plead againſt it as he did: For thus he Expoſtulated with his Brother upon ſome difference, that was likely to happen between them: *Let there be no ſtrife* (ſaith he) *I pray thee between me and thee, between thy Herdsmen and my Herdsmen* (and why?) *for we are Brethren*; and ſo they wiſely and diſcreetly, and like two loving Brethren compoſed the difference themſelves between themſelves; and good Peacable *Abraham*, that made the firſt offer, was the better by it afterwards in many reſpects, as may be ſeen in *Gen.* 13.

XXX. And in *Acts* 7.26. its ſaid, that *Moſes*, that meek Man uſed the very ſame Plea as before, he ſeeing two *Hebrews* ſtriving together, the next day (its ſaid) he ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſaying, *Sirs, ye are Brethren*; *Why do ye wrong one to another*? As indeed in all ſorts of quarrellings, and fallings out the wrong lies not only on the one parties ſide, but is mutual; and though both are to be partly blamed in one reſpect or other, yet the one may be more in the wrong than the other, and one more wronged too than another. But its certain they are moſt of all in the wrong, and moſt to be blamed who will not admit of a Reconciliation, or refuſe to comply with ſuch rational and Chriſtian like Expedients that tend to it; and as, one well obſerves from the aforeſaid Scripture, he that would not hear of the putting a ſtop to the quarrel, it was he that reproached *Moſes* with the aſſiſtance he had given the Day before to an *Iſraelite* againſt an *Ægyptian*; ſo enraged he was at the friendly Interpoſition of *Moſes* in the Matter, that he ſeems concerned for the *Egyptian* that was killed; a publick Enemy being leſs hated than a Brother, when theſe Domeſtick Feuds are raiſed to any height, even then a Reconciler becomes more odious than an *Alien* (as is obſerved by many.)

XXXI. And indeed it often happens, that he who goes about to part a Frey, in all likelyhood will have Blows on both ſides, eſpecially where the Oppoſites and Combatants are Fierce and Violent; he that is eager in any one ſide, ſhall be ſure to find ſome faſt Friend, but he that endeavours to be a Reconciler and as a Mediator betwixt both, bewailing and being greatly grieved at

at the miſerable Loſs, Hurt and Ruin that happens to the whole, and doth but ſet a foot forward to make up the Breach, will find few to take his part; (and that is one reaſon why there are not more Moderators and Reconcilers amongſt People; moſt love their eaſe too much, and as they uſe to ſay, to ſleep in a whole skin) but ſhall be ſure to have many about his Ears; and therefore we may obſerve that after it is ſaid, *bleſſed are the Peace-makers*, it is immediately added alſo, *bleſſed are they that are Perſecuted*, &c.

XXXII. But we hope better things of many of them than to do ſo, by ſuch as appear in healing and re-pairing Breaches among us, and that it would be far more becoming us, who profeſs that glorious peaceable Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus, which as it tends to bring Glory to God on high, ſo does it no leſs Conduce to peace on Earth (tho' not to the Earthly part in any,) and to good will towards all Men, and would be more Chriſtian and Prudent-like in us, in that Meek, Gentle, Charitable and Submiſſive Condeſcending Mind, to ſay one to another, Come Friends, let us now lay aſide all our Animoſities, Heats and Feuds, let us compare the Importance and Weight of thoſe things in which we agree, with that in which we differ, and ſee which ought to ballance us moſt; let us now be reconciled and made Friends together again; let us lay aſide all Prejudice and Pertinacy, wait together in lowlineſs of heart, and feel that ancient ſpring of Love and divine Life to Unite and Cement us into that bleſſed Fellowſhip, Unity and Concord, and in the ſame, let us begin afreſh again, and what is paſt be remembred no more, than if it never had been; let us forget thoſe things that are behind, and let us preſs towards that great and glorious Prize we all have had in our view: Has not alas the Controverſie and Differences been too too long kept on foot, and keept up between us, both to our ſhame and ſorrow? Its now more than high time for us all to leave off contendings and ſtrivings together, and quietly ſubmit in the Love of God one to another, and lay aſide on both hands, all things tending to Controverſies, Differences and all manner of Prejudices, opprobious Reflections, undecent Recriminations, and odious Compariſons.

XXXIII. O let us not diſpute the matter in the anger and heat of

of our Spirits any more; but if we will ſtrive let it be then, who ſhall exceed moſt in Temperance, Patience, Love and Forbearance, who moſt Charitable and Moderate, and who ſhall moſt follow after thoſe things which make for Peace and Concord, and things wherewith one may edifie one another; let us not any more undervalue both our ſelves, and alſo (which is more) the very common Intereſt of Truth, and of our Holy Religion. Let us therefore be of a tractable or treatable Temper, and Comply and Condeſcend without any more ado, without Reaſoning this, or Conſulting other things (whereby Self in all would ſave it's own Reputation) with reaſonable Expedients and Chriſtian Propoſals, let us freely and fully, and from our Hearts forgive one another, &c. as the Apoſtle ſaid to the

Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. *Philippians, If there be therefore any Conſolation in Chriſt, if any Comfort, if any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies: fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vainglory any more, but in lowlineſs of mind, let each eſteem other better than themſelves, look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others. Let this mind be in you,* which is for a Publick and Univerſal good *) which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

Contains a Collection of divers remarkable Teſtimonies, ſuitable to the Subject treated on.

MAny other Convincing Motives and pacifick Arguments upon divers accounts, might be uſed and urged, to perſwade you to the aforeſaid Noble Reſolution; but it would be too tedious to inſert them here: However to promote and encourage the ſame, conſider further theſe following Teſtimonies in the firſt place, and afterwards ſome preſſing Conſiderations to excite all towards Peace, *&c.*

I. *Euſebius de vita Conſt.* 67. *Conſtantine* ſaith to the Biſhops you are not ignorant, the *Philoſophers* all of them, do agree in the profeſſion of the ſame Diſcipline, but do oftentimes differ in ſome part of the Opinions that they Dogmatize; but tho' they do diſſent about the Diſcipline that each † ſeveral Sect obſerveth, they nevertheleſs Reconcile themſelves again, for the ſake of that Common Profeſſion, to which they have concurred.

† Obſ. *As* Themiſtus *in his Oration to* Valens, *ſaith, there were at leaſt* 300 *amongſt the Gentile Philoſophers, &c.*

II. *J. Hooper* in his *Eccleſiaſtical Polity*, ſaith, The Time will come when three words with Charity and Meekneſs, ſhall receive a far more bleſſed Reward than 3000 Volumes written with diſdainful ſharpneſs; or he might have added twice 3000 Sermons framed from Mens inventions, and delivered with the greateſt Eloquence or Acuteneſs of Wit. A late Ingenuous Author, ſays, I truſt in the Almighty God, that Contentions with us, are now at the higheſt float, and that the day will come (for what cauſe is there of deſpair) when the Paſſions of former Enmity being allayed, Men ſhall with ten times redoubled tokens of unfeigned reconciled Love, ſhew themſelves each to other the ſame, which *Joſeph* and the Brethren of *Joſeph* were at the time of their enterview in *Egypt*.

III. There was a long feud between *Themiſtocles* and *Ariſtides*: But being both imployed in the ſervice of their Country,

Ariſtides beſpake *Themiſtocles* thus, If we be wiſe it's high time we ſhould now leave off this vain Envy & Spite we have a long time born each other; And that we ſhould enter into another ſort of Envy more honourable and profitable, I mean, which of us two ſhall do his beſt endeavour to ſave *Greece*: To which *Themiſtocles* made this anſwer. I am ſorry *Ariſtides* that herein your Honeſty appeareth greater than mine; but ſeeing it is that you have deſerved the Honour in beginning and procuring ſuch a Commendable Strife between us, I will henceforth endeavour to exceed you in continuing this your deſire. Oh! that Saints (ſays the Author upon this) would learn Heathens to lay aſide their particular differences to mind publick advantage. Shall Heathens be better at ſelf-denial than Chriſtians?

Cauſinus tells us of one *Raymundus Lullius*, who was ſo raviſhed with Love, that being asked any thing, he would anſwer, nothing but Love. Where dwelleſt thou? With Love. To whom belongeſt thou? to Love. From whence comeſt thou? From Love? Whether goeſt thou? To Love, *&c.*

IV. It was well obſerved by a Learned and Judicious Perſon, That the Unity and Peace, that was then, *viz.* in the early, and indeed the beſt Times of Chriſtianity amonſt Chriſtians) made Religion amiable in the judgment of Impartial Heathens; Chriſtians were then known by the Benignity and Sweetneſs of their diſpoſition, by the Candor and Ingenuity of their Spirits, by their mutual Love, Forbearance and Condeſcention one to another. Theſe were indeed bleſſed Marks, but either this is not the practice of Chriſtianity, (*viz.* a Duty the Chriſtians are now bound to obſerve) or elſe it is not Calculated for our Meridian, where the Spirits of men are of too high an Elevation for it; for if Pride and Unchritableneſs, if Wrath and Envy, if Animoſities and Contentions were but the marks of true Chriſtians, *Diogenes* need never light his Lamp at Noon to find out ſuch among us; but if a Spirit of Meekneſs, Gentleneſs and Condeſcenſion; if a ſtooping to the weakneſſes and infirmities of one another; if purſuit after Peace when it flies from us, be the Indiſpenſible Duties and Characteriſtical Notes of Chriſtians, it may poſſibly be a difficult Inqueſt to find out ſuch, for the crouds of thoſe that ſhelter themſelves under that Glorious Name. V. *Ter-*

V. *Tertullian* that Famour and Learned Apologiſt, publiſhed his Apology or Defence of the Chriſtians againſt the accuſations of the *Gentiles* in the 10th. Year of the Empire of *Severus*, in the Year of our Lord 204. Among many other excellent ſayings thererein take theſe few.

It is equally forbidden us to wiſh to do evil, or to ſpeak evil of our Neighbours, *&c.* and in *Chap.* 39. But it is a ſtrange thing that this Charity among us, gives occaſion to ſome to blame us: See, ſaith he, how they Love one another? This aſtoniſheth them, becauſe they hate one another. See (ſay they) how they are ready to Die one for another? But as for them they are ready to Kill one another. It muſt not ſeem ſtrange to you, if we call one another Brethren, ſeeing we are all your Brethren by the right of Nature, which is Mother to us all; we have the ſame Principles as you, but you Renounce the Humanity common to to us, becauſe you are evil Brethren to us. But with how much more reaſon are they called and eſteemed Brethren, who acknowledge one and the ſame Father, to wit, the living God, that have received the ſame Spirit of Sanctity, *&c.* But alas! it was not long when they degenerated from both that Purity and Charity that appeared among them for the 1ſt. 2d. or 300. Years, and gave occaſion to Heathens, both to ſee and ſay, how they Hated, Tear'd, Devour'd, and did Bite and Perſecute one another, how they Killed and Deſtroyed one another, and how they impoſed upon, and inſulted over each other, according as they had the Civil Powers on their ſides; and being unhappily once broken into pieces and divided into ſeparate Parties and diſtinct Societies, then each ſide did ſtrive to ſuppreſs others, and maintain their own Intereſts, right or wrong, as might be largely Inſtanced from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtories of *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, &c. And alas! has it been much better of late Years amongſt Profeſſors of Chriſtianity? And how happy would it be for Chriſtendom, it were not ſo ſtill even in our days!

Chap. 36.

VI. In the aforeſaid Hiſtory of *Euſebius*, *l.* 8. *Chap.* 1. is declared both the happineſs of the Primitive Chriſtians, while they kept in Love and Unity together, as alſo what miſerable condition they were brought to by their mutual hatred, *&c.* thus

expreſſed: Theſe things having thus prevailed (ſays he) and daily increaſed (*viz.* Favour and Reverence they had amongſt all ſorts of Men) far and near, ſo that no Malice could intercept, no ſpiteful Fiend bewitch, *&c.* as long as the Divine and heavenly hand of God upheld and viſited his People, whom as yet he worthily accepted. But after that our affairs through too much Liberty, Eaſe, and Security degenerated from the natural rule of piety, and after that one purſued another with open Contumely and Hatred, and when that we impugned our ſelves by no other than our ſelves, with the Armour of Spight and ſharp Spears, Opprobrious words, ſo that Biſhops againſt Biſhops, and People againſt People, raiſed Sedition. Laſt of all, when that curſed Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation had ſwum over even to the brim of malice, the heavy hand of Gods high Judgment after his wonted manner, began ſoftly a little and little to viſit us, ſo that the Perſecution that was raiſed againſt us took his firſt original from the Brethren, which were under Banner in Camp, whereas we were touched with no ſenſe or feeling thereof, neither went about to pacifie God, we heaped Sin upon Sin, thinking like careleſs *Epicures*, that God neither cared, neither would viſit our ſins. And they which ſeemed our Shepherds, laying aſide the rule of Piety, practiſed Contention and Schiſm among themſelves, whilſt they heaped theſe things, that is, Contention, Threatnings, mutual hatred and enmity, and every one proceeded in Ambition much like Tiranny it ſelf: Then I ſay, Then the Lord according to the ſaying of *Jeremiah Lam.* 2. *made the Daughter of Sion obſcure, and overthrew from above the glory of Iſrael*, &c.

This was in Ano. Dom. 1301. *ſome time before the* 10th. *great Perſecution raiſed by* Diocleſian.

VII. But O Friends, how contrary and directly oppoſite are ſuch Fractions, Diviſions, Contentions, Diſcords, *&c.* (amongſt thoſe who declared themſelves to be Children of one Father, and followers of the ſame Lord Jeſus) to that ſolemn and moſt fervent prayer in *John* 17. which our bleſſed Maſter offered up to his Father, in the Days of his External bleſſed appearance in that Holy Body of Fleſh, and which he poured out but a little before his Death? With what fervency of Spirit doth he pray for Unity among his Diſciples, and all his People that ſhould believe on him? Its remarkable that no leſs than four

four times doth he repeat the ſame Supplication, and every time riſes higher and higher, and more and more earneſt for it: Firſt, that they might be one: Secondly, that they may be one in us: Thirdly, that they may be one, even as we are one: And Laſtly, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the World may know that thou haſt ſent me, *&c.* And how much, and how often he recommends, and commands loving one another, none can be ignorant who have read any of the Books of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*, called the four Evangeliſts.

VIII. It was well obſerved by one, that our Saviour has made the Doctrins of Meekneſs and Charity, ſuch ingredients in his Goſpel, that he has made them the Characters, by which his Diſciples may be every where known; and this Spirit of love is ſo diffuſed through the writings of the New Teſtament, that how hard ſoever it may be to underſtand ſome of the other paſſages that are in them, yet there is no Ambiguity at all in thoſe that ſet this forth. There are ſome of the Epiſtles that do not mention ſeveral of the Duties incumbent on Chriſtians, yet there is not one how ſhort ſoever, in which this of love is not propoſed in Terms that are both ſtrong and tender: And while the Church of *Corinth* was almoſt rent aſunder, by variety of Opinions, and by the different parties that followed ſeveral Teachers that had been among them: The Apoſtle does not enter much into the grounds of their Diſputes, but recommends Love and Charity to them. The Apoſtle *John* lived ſo long as to ſee a great deal of the firſt fervour of the Chriſtian Religion ſlacken; but when he wrote to revive that Spirit, the Argument upon which he chiefly dwells, is to perſwade all to love one another; and he does that in the ſofteſt and moſt melting language that can be.

IX. The Controverſie concerning the Obligation that lay on the *Gentiles*, for obeying the Moſaical Law, was judged by the Apoſtles, againſt the Judaizers; and the inferences that depended on that Controverſie, were ſuch, that the Apoſtle *Paul* ſays they went ſo far, as to make void the Death of Chriſt; yet the ſame Apoſtle is Gentle to thoſe that without ſeeing the extent of thoſe Conſequences, were carried away by thoſe Judaizers,

Judaizers, ſo that he acknowledges that in their obſerving them from a good motive, they were acceptable to God; and that as the Kingdom of God, or the Goſpel conſiſted not in ſcrupulous diſtinctions of Meats and Drinks, but in Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, ſo he adds, that every Man was to endeavour to be fully perſwaded in his own Mind, and was not to Judg his Brother in ſuch Matters, but to leave him to the Judgment of God.

X. *Anthony* the Great (as *Jerom* witneſſeth) when he uſed Exhortations to the People to ſtir them up to Godlineſs and Vertue; was wont to wiſh them always to keep in Mind, and often meditate upon that Saying of the Apoſtle, *Sol non occidet ſuper Iracundiam veſtram*, let not the Sun go down upon your wrath; and this Prohibition he did not reſtrain to wrath only, but made it general, let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, Hatred, Malice, Envy, Luſt, or any other Sin, leſt it depart from you as a Witneſs againſt you.

See Drexelius his conſiderations upon Eternity Chap. 3. 174.

Now Friends, if all thoſe, whoever they be, that are Implacable and of an Irreconcilable and Untreatable Temper, and who through that too powerful Influence, that Prejudice, Enmity, and Revenge which has ſo deeply prevailed upon their Spirits are wholly averſe to a Reconciliation or Peace one with another; and not only ſo; but can very ſecurely and unconcernedly (which indeed is ſtrange, but that ſuch ſeem to be hardned in their Enmity) ſpend Days and Nights one after another, nay and Months, and Years, to live at ſuch an Unnatural, Unneighbourly, Unfriendly, and Unchriſtian like Diſtance, Strangeneſs and Antipathy, and in Diſcord and variance; did they, I ſay, but once ſeriouſly conſider with themſelves, and had that due, weighty ſenſe of Launching into Eternity, in ſuch a ſad, deplorable State, as aforeſaid; and how ſuddenly that Morning, Evening, or Hour may come (leaſt of all thought thought of by too many) as of all things we know Death is moſt uncertain, both as to the time and manner thereof) wherein ſuch may be ſummoned, by that undeniable Meſſenger to remove for ever from off the Stage of this World; had they a right ponderous Senſe of this upon their Spirits; O how could they give Sleep to their Eyes, or ſlumber to their Eyelids,

or

or take their natural reſt ſecurely or comfortably for one Night, or one hour, till they found the univerſal tender love of God, and that Good will ſpring up in their Souls, and that Charitable Diſpoſition raiſed up in them towards all, even thoſe whom they may account as their greateſt Enemies; in which they could heartily deſire, and as freely and fully forgive them all their Treſpaſſes or Offences, as they themſelves would be forgiven of God.

XI. In which tender Chriſtian frame of Spirit, they could not be at all ſatisfied in their Minds, nor think all ever well with them (nor indeed can it ever be well with any, let them pretend or ſay what they will, and make this or the other thing as the reaſon of their excuſe; and it may be pleaded that the quarrel is on Gods, or Truths account, tho' in the bottom, if it were well ſearched into, there is a great deal of perſonal prejudice, grudge, diſlike, *&c.* ſecretly entertained) till they had made their Peace, and were reconciled to all with whom they be at varience, and at a diſtance (let it be upon what account it will) or at leaſt ways had done what lies in their power, and to the utmoſt laboured and uſed all poſſible endeavours, and reaſonable means on their part for attaining the ſame. And wherein any has done amiſs in acting contrary to Truth, we are to leave them to anſwer to God for it, whom they have chiefly offended, having in a Chriſtian frame of Spirit cleared our conſciences, and in true tenderneſs diſcharged that incumbent Duty towards them, in order to their recovery; and however we are not in the leaſt to approve of the evil in any (nor even in our ſelves) nor ſtand by them or countenance them therein; yet we muſt beware of Hatred, Enmity or Prejudice to the Perſons, which is a hard leſſon for many to learn, who do not know what it is to forgive, or if they do know, yet do not practiſe it.

For by forgiving is meant (as one well obſerves) the not avenging of injuries or contumelies, not ſuffering their Treſpaſſes againſt Men; Nay, nor ſins againſt God, to cool or leſſen my Charity and Mercy to them; but loving and compaſſionating; and ſhewing all effects of true Chriſtian mercy (ſuch eſpecially as may do them moſt good) as well to Enemies and ſinners, as

to

to Friends: This alas has been, and is ſtill too too much wanting among many Profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

XII. And I pray God that all were of the ſame good Charitable Conſiderate Mind, as is reported of one *John*, Patriarch of *Alexandria* to be of, who had a certain Controverſie, with one *Nicetas*, a Chief Man of that City; And it being ſuch a very remarkable and imitable Paſſage, and worthy of deep Conſideration, it deſerves to be Tranſcribed, (tho' ſomething large) and added to the foregoing Teſtimonies, it is thus. The matter was to be tryed at Law; *John* was for the Poor, *Nicetas* for his Mony (the Reader may eaſily judge whoſe Cauſe was beſt) but for Peace ſake, there was a Private Meeting and Hearing appointed, to ſee if they could come to ſome Compoſition and Agreement; they Met, they fell to Words, they were hot at it, a great deal of Choler and Stomach was ſhewn on both parts; neither would yield a jot, nor depart an inch from his Right; a great Conflict there was between them, many hours ſpent to little purpoſe, they were further off from agreement at length than before, for neither would yield to Conditions Propounded by either. Well, it grew late, they departed more offended and diſpleaſed one with another than before (as indeed is too uſual the effects of ſuch Meetings of Controverting Matters, *&c.*) and ſo left the Suit pendent. *Nicetas* thought it hard to part with his Mony, and the Patriarch ſeemed to be in the right, and to ſtand out in the Cauſe of God and the Poor.

Note this well.

XIII. But yet when *Nicetas* was gone, the good old Biſhop weighed the matter better with himſelf, and condemned himſelf for his Pertinacy (how few will do ſo now) and tho' he was in a good Cauſe, and knew it alſo, yet ſaid, Can I think that God will be pleaſed with this *Implacable Wrath*, that is impious, and not according to the Council of the Apoſtle? So the good Prelate could not be at reſt till he had ſent to *Nicetas*; for he out of hand ſent Meſſengers of good eſteem, and gave them this Charge, That they ſhould ſay no more to him, but only this, *Domine, Sol ad occaſum eſt*, that is, Sir, *the Sun is going down.* Upon the hearing of which Meſſage there was ſuch a ſuddain alteration wrought in *Nicetas*, that his ſtomach came down

The Biſhops Chriſtian ſayings.

down presently, he began to melt, his eyes did stand full swoln with tears, and he had much ado to keep them in; out of doors he ran presently after the Messengers, for he made hast to speak with the *Patriarch*, and coming to him in humble manner saluted him thus, *Holy Father, I will be ruled by you in this or any other matter*: Whereupon the *Patriarch* made him very Welcome, and so they Embraced each other very lovingly, and became good Friends.

Observe what good effects the Patriarchs first Condescending and seeking Peace and reconciliation which Nicetas, produced, &c.

XIV. Great, surely (says my Author *Drexelius* upon the place aforesaid, in his 7. Consideration upon Eternity, *page* 174.) and speedy was the Operation of these few words, *The Sun is going down*, for presently upon the hearing thereof, a Peace was Concluded betwixt them, which was sought for before with multitude of Words, but could not be effected; so do thou (says he) whosoever thou art that knowest thy self guilty of any grievous sin, call to mind these operative words, *The Sun is going down*, for what knowest thou whether thou shalt rise again with the *Sun* or no; and if thou diest in the Night without Repentance, it is a question in which Eternity thou shalt have thy part, whether of the Blessed or of the Cursed; wherefore do what thou hast to do quickly, *The Sun is going down.* But have a care it go not down upon thy Lust or Luxury, Envy or Blasphemy, Detraction, Theft, Malice, Hatred, Pride or Revenge, *&c.* or upon any other grievous Sin unrepented of.

XV. But besides what may be said as a Motive or Argument, and that weighty enough too in its place, as with respect to the going down of the outward or Natural *Sun*, to perswade all to be of a tractable and reconcilable Temper, of a Charitable, Sweet, Loving and Peaceable Disposition towards all. Something further might be also said, and that of a far more weighty Consequence, and that is, as concerning the setting or going down of the spiritual *Sun*, I mean when the Heavenly divine and saving Light, sweet Healing Influences, and pure Comfortable Rays, reviving and refreshing Beams thereof are wholly withdrawn from such a Man, or Woman, who wilfully persists from time to time in any Irreconcilable, Implacable, Envious and Revengeful mind, so as at last they provoke

the Lord to leave them, and ſuffer that diſmal Night of Darkneſs and Obſcurity to overtake and come over them, where the light of Gods glorious Countenance ſhall never again be ſeen to ſhine upon their Tabernacles, nor the divine Sun of Righteouſneſs ever riſe or appear any more upon their Horizon or Habitations. And this indeed is moſt ſad and dreadful, and how ſuddenly this Judgment (the moſt fearful of all) may be inflicted upon them, who do go on and continue in that which is highly offenſive to the Lord, as no doubt all kind of Enmity, Malice Hatred and Uncharitableneſs, Prejudice and Revenge are very great evils in his ſight, wherever the ſame appears, let them be covered with what ſpecious pretence or excuſe ſoever.

It is that O Man, and O Woman, whoever thou be, that is found guilty hereof before him that may provoke the Righteous God to ſhorten the day of thy viſitation of his Love and Grace to thee, and that before thou be aware of it, if ſo be thou ſtill perſiſt therein. And altho' for a time, to ſuch, Revenge may ſeem pleaſant, and be as a ſweet Morſel, yet it will be bitter in the end, and be as Gall of *Aſps* within them. And its poſſible alſo that ſuch may live as to the natural Life, and the outward Sun often both riſe and ſet, even after the Lord hath thus left them wholly to themſelves, and his Spirit ceaſed ſtriving any more in, or with them, and ſo in this reſpect, the ſpiritual Sun forever to be ſet, or go down as to them, altho' it never ſets or goes down as to it ſelf; but its divine Light, Splendor and Glory, is from everlaſting to everlaſting, and which forever purely ſhines, in and upon the Souls of the Righteous, and all ſuch as are of a Tender, Merciful, and Compaſſionate frame of Spirit, and full of Bowels, and live and die in true Love, Good-will and Charity towards all.

XVI. And may it not be fitly ſaid concerning Reconciliation, Peace, *&c.* (as ſaith one of the *Ancients*,) That it is the Muniment of a Common wealth, the Staff of Policy, the very Badg of Chriſtianity? The very name of it (ſaith the moſt Eloquent of all the *Roman* || Orators) is lovely, and the nature of it (ſaith the moſt divine among the *Heathen* || Philoſophers, as he is called) is Heavenly.

Hillar. de vera pacificat.

||M. Tullius *Cicer.*

||L. Anneus Seneca *de tranquilitate.*

The ſame Philoſopher ſaith, it is the part of a ſilly and miſerable

miſerable man to bite him, that biteth him. To ſtrive againſt our Equals is a matter doubtful, againſt our Superiours it is fury, againſt our Inferiors it is baſeneſs. The diſpleaſure ſuddenly quelleth, when as the one part forbeareth to contend: Hath he ſtricken thee, fly back, for in ſtriking again thou ſhalt give both occaſion to ſtrike often, and an excuſe for ſtriking; and ſo King *Solomon*, that was much wiſer, long ſince told us, and which we know by experience to be true, *That the beginning of Strife, is as when one letteth out Water; therefore leave off Contention before it be medled with*: For as in the breach of a Water-Courſe, if ſtopped in time, will prevent the following abroad, which otherways muſt needs break out; ſo in the breach of Peace and Concord, when it firſt appears, if there be not a preſent and prudent ſtop, it will break forth into open Contention, for a ſmall ſpark, if not quenched in time, may blow up a whole City.

Seneca *de ira.* lib. 2. cap. 4.

Prov. 17. 14.

XVII. It is a noted Rule in Phyſick, that all Immoderations are enemies to Health; and it is as true a rule in Divinity, That all Immoderations and extreams are enemies unto both quietneſs of Mind in ones own particular, and alſo to Peace and Concord with others, and which have been always very prejudicial to all Societies; therefore that ſeaſonable and Apoſtolical Admonition is needful to be minded and practiſed by all, *viz. Let your moderation be known to all men*, (and why) *becauſe the Lord* (who is the great Judge of all) *is at hand*, he is near. This doth not only relate to our Eating, Drinking, *&c.* appertaining to the outward Man, but alſo reſpects an Immoderate or Blind Zeal, in ſuch who are apt to be too forward and ſevere in their Judging, Cenſuring, and Condemning of others. Such may alſo read the 14th. *Chap.* of *Pauls* Epiſtle to the *Romans*, eſpecially the 4, 5, and 10. *verſes*. And as one wiſely obſerves, that in Nature we ſee all Heat Conſumes, all Cold Kills, that three degrees of Cold and two of Heat allays the heat, but introduces the contrary quality, and overcools by a degree, but two degrees of Cold to two of Heat, make; a poize in Elements, and a ballance in Nature, *&c.* Beſides, as the *Maxim* is, *nullum extremum eſt perpetuum*, There is no Extreme that's laſting, as we have had many experiences.

Hypoc. Aphoriſ.

Phil. 4. 5.

Virtus ſtat. in medio.

Plutarch Apoth. XVIII. Notable and very Remarkable is that paſſage concerning *Silurnus* an Heathen Parent (ſo called,) who having many Children and fearing leſt ſome unquietneſs ſhould grow between them; to the end he might the better perſuade them to entertain a conſtant Peace and Concord between themſelves, he took a Sheaf of many Arrows and offerded it to each of his Children one after another, willing them to break it, but they could not ſo long as the Arrows were altogether in one Bundle. At laſt, pulling forth the Arrows one by one, it was an eaſy matter for them to break them all one after another; even thus ſaid their Father it is with you, ſo long as you remain united and love each other, no Man can hurt or break you; but if once ye be diſſevered one from another, by ſtrife or variance, every Man may eaſily deſtroy you.

Note this well.

Strife and Variance between Brethren, whether upon a Natural or Spiritual account, is a thing moſt barbarous and prodigious; and all Enmity, ſaith a wiſe Heathen (ſo termed) breedeth within our ſelves a thouſand tormenting paſſions, but eſpecially between Brother and Brother.

Plutarch.

XIX. When *Socrates* ſaw *Cherephom* and *Cherecratis*, two Brethren, jarring and warring each with other, he ſaid unto them, ye do now as if the Hands which were created to help one the other, ſhould hinder and hurt each other; or as if the Feet which were framed to bear one anothers burden, ſhould ſupplant one another; or as if the Ears, Coadjutors of mutual good, ſhould wax deaf to hear good one of another; or as if the Eyes, which are fellow-ſpies for the good each of other, ſhould look aſquint at the good one of another.

Zenoph. lib. 2. de dict. & fact. Socrat.

Let none hold together like *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in evil and miſchief, but like *David* and *Jonathan*, to preſerve one another from evil, &c. Its ſaid of the former two in *Gen* 49. 5. *Inſtruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O* (as in the Margin) *their words are Weapons of Violence. O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecret; unto their aſſembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they ſlew a Man, and in their ſelfwill they digged down a wall. Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce;* Iſa. 59. 8, 9, &c. *and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in* Jacob, *and ſcatter them in* Iſrael. Pray Friends read and conſider the Cha-

Characters of those of old, concerning whom it is said, *that the way of Peace they know not*, and if we do know it and yet do not walk in it, nor pursue peace, it will be far worse for us.

XX. O let not our Lord when he cometh find any of us smiting or beating our Fellow-servants, neither let any give just cause to say of them as of him of old: *It is thou and thy Fathers House that troubleth Israel, &c.* that do chiefly obstruct that Peace, Concord and Reconciliation amongst us, which is so earnestly desired by many on both sides; such may be said to be (as observed by one) neither Actively Peaceable, nor Passively Peaceable, neither as Peace-makers, nor Peace-takers; and so in some sense may be accounted, also the Peace-breakers. And these are they that both raise and keep up Strife and Contention, and Discord among Brethren. *Whose Tongues are full of deadly Poison; which setteth on Fire the course of nature, it self being set on Fire of Hell.* For tho' there be that speak *like the piercings of a Sword*; yet their words may be sometimes *even smoother than Oyl.* Ja. 3. 8 1. Prov. 12. 18.

XXI. The Tongue (as *Petrarch* says) is the mighty Bellows to blow up strife, *&c.* and grievous words, says the wise Man, stir up anger. But the discretion of a Man *differeth his Anger, or is seen by his patience*, as some render it, *and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.* And as there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness (of both Flesh Spirit) O how lofty are their Eyes and Eyelids lifted up; so there is a generation, *Whose Teeth are as Swords, and their Jaw-Teeth as Knives; and are* there not some whose *words are smoother than Butter and softer than Oyl, and yet be they very swords*, &c. Prov. 19. 11. Psal. 55. 21.

XXI. Remarkable is that Golden sentence of that Golden Mouthed Father *Chrysostom*, as he is called; Didst thou know (saith he) the worth of Peace and Quietness, or consider the sweetness of it, thou wouldest sell all that thou hast to buy it; were it present thou wouldst welcome it; were it absent, thou wouldst make search after it; were it lost, thou wouldst never leave until thou hadst recovered it; were it to be bought, thou wouldst think no Silver or Gold too much to procure it.

XXII. Let us also take notice what *Luther*, that worthy and famous Reformer, says in his Commentary on 133 *Psal.* It is, Pag. 299.

saith

ſaith he, a commendation of Peace and Unity, to the end we ſhould eſteem it as an excellent and Holy gift, and that we ſhould rather ſuſtain the loſs of all things elſe, than give occaſion of Diſſention and Diſcord; for if we muſt ſuffer any loſs, it ought to be born patiently in this reſpect, that all other things through Peace are recovered, and reſtored again, as one ſaid very well, I never bought any thing better cheap than Peace, for to the Buyer it bringeth moſt plentiful Fruit; for we ſee oftentimes in our private affairs, that if a Man be content to loſe ten or twenty Crowns, that he may live in Peace and quietneſs, he winneth thereby great Gain and Commodity, *&c.* He alſo ſaith in another place, That truth is not loſt by teaching, but by diſputing and contending, the Minds of Men being carried away by the heat thereof; they neglect thoſe things whichmoſt of all they ought to regard, &c.

XXIII. And indeed, would it not be both far more profitable to all People, in general, and more conducing to Peace, Concord and Reconciliation one with another, to have fewer Books and Papers (and a happy day and time when there will be none at all) of Controverſies, of Replies and Rejoynders *pro & con*, which do for the moſt part of them (proceeding from either the heat or wiſdom of Mans Spirit) exceedingly confound, and cloud the plaineſs, ſimplicity and glory of Truth, and perplex and bewilder the Minds of poor People, and which alſo has too too often in them, much of ſelf-paſſion or undecent Recriminations, or glory of Reputation, by-ends, intereſts or ſome private advantages or other propoſed, which makes many unwilling to yield, tho' poſſibly convinced in their judgments, *&c.* And if there were more practical Treatiſes (inſtead of the Controverſial ones as aforeſaid) tending to promote Piety, Peace, Love, Unity, Concord, and Friendſhip, in the Life of Righteouſneſs: For as an ingenuous Writer well obſerves, That our Diviſions have grown upon us, by the neglect of practical Duties: For as every age degenerated more from Primitive Piety; So they advanced further in nice inquiries and new opinions; and as the Zeal of practice grew cool, ſo that of diſpute gathered head and vigour. So that if we conſider how far our good works fall ſhort of

See the Cauſes of the decay of Chriſtian Piety Pag. 321.

of theſe firſt Chriſtians, we need not wonder to ſee our Controverſies ſo far exceeding them; that time which was gained from the one, being employed in hammering, and forging the other, and the true Goſpel Graces of Meekneſs, Peaceableneſs and Univerſal Charity are accounted earthly, phlegmatick qualities; we diſclaim that Holy Ghoſt which deſcends in the appearance of a Dove; Nay or in the Fire either, unleſs it be like that of *Elijah*, to conſume all that diſguſt us, *&c.*

It had been well (as *W. P.* ſays) if Men had entertained equal Zeal againſt Impiety, and been but half as much Enemies to their Sins, as they have been one againſt another: See his Addreſs to Proteſtants, *Pag.* 63. the whole is well worth reading, but eſpecially the 2d. part; which is a very ſubſtantial excellent Treatiſe, and plain againſt all impoſition, *&c.* in matters of Faith, *&c.*

XXIV. It is eaſy (as I remember an ancient moderate Friend ſaid) to judg, but hard to ſave; and alſo, ſaith he, that is moſt in the Life of the Son is moſt ſenſible of the hurts of others, and moſt touched with the feeling of their Wounds, Not ſlightly paſſing by, like the Prieſt, but Mercifully, Pitying, and healing like the good *Samaritan*; for it is a Symton of hardneſs of him that ſlights the Wounds and Bruiſes of his Brethren, thereby pouring Brine into their Wounds rather than Oyl of Love and Tenderneſs. Such Phiſitians rather help to feſter than cure the hurt, and to increaſe the pain than to ſtop the ſpreading of the Diſeaſe; whereby a little ſlip doth prove as a dangerous Sprain, and a ſmall Bruiſe ſometimes to the loſs of a Member, and grieving of the whole Body, and all for want either of skill or Senſe (or both). Where skill is wanting, there he may adminiſter that which doth encreaſe the Diſtemper, and thereby both diſparage himſelf, and endanger the Patient: And where Senſe is wanting, there auſterity and rigidneſs is uſually met withal: But rather ſaith he, Gentleneſs and forbearance muſt be uſed as by the application (not of harſhneſs and preſent judging or ſtanding at a diſtance but) of warm Cloaths and ſuppling Oyls uſed by a gentle Hand, with much pains and often exhortation in the Stirrings of Love, and Riſings of the Life, and yet feeds not the benummedneſs or ſenſeleſſneſs, but

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but cheriſheth the Life, and ſo recovers the Senſe, whereby it is reſtored to the former office in the Body, and more filled with compaſſion, uſefulneſs and diligence than before, and the other Members are now made more ſenſible of the benefit of Patience and Long-ſufferings, and ſees from whence that ſprings that would limit unto Seven times, and how narrow and ſhort it is of the fulneſs of Mercy it ſelf, that is unlimited, but binds the limiting Spirit unto the perfecting of the Praiſes of the God of everlaſting Goodneſs and Mercy.

SECT. III.

Some Objections *fairly Stated, with their* Anſwers, *as alſo divers weighty Conſiderations propoſed.*

Object. 1. BUT then there are ſome Objections that ſeem difficult to Anſwer; And 1ſt. ſome may be apt to ſay, and all will conclude, that Peace and Reconciliation amongſt us, is far to be preferred to Strife and Contention; and that as it is in Temporals, ſo it is in Spirituals, Peace brings Plenty, but Wars always the contrary, Ruin, Scarcity and Poverty upon a *Spiritual* account: Alſo we are ſenſible that Reconciliation is very deſirable, and a good Work; and a happy People were we, could both theſe be obtained. But alas, (here lies the difficulty, and truly it is ſo) Who ſhall begin this good Work firſt, and how ſhall it be carried on, ſuppoſe it were begun? Its true, if every one would but ſubmit to that Eternal Power which firſt reached to us, and viſited us, and made us near and dear one to another, that alone would ſoon both begin, carry it on, and finiſht it: But alas, each ſide pleads ſo much for themſelves (there lies the pinch and obſtruction,) and one party placing all, or moſt of the blame on the other, and yet neither ſide will readily grant to be in the fault, or blame-worthy, and both are apt to ſay in the mean time, we want not Charity; if any have done amiſs and wronged

wronged us, let them confeſs and amend; we have Charity enough to forgive, and we would be glad to have them Reconciled to us as Brethren, *&c.*

Anſw. Now this great and chief Objection, Friends, you muſt needs acknowledge is fairly Stated, and it contains two or three Parts: Something in ſhort to each Part: As to the firſt, who ſhall begin it, *&c.* There are ſome who through mercy, are neither ſo Strait, nor ſo Prejudiced, or Byaſſed in their Spirits to any Party, but will be free to Stoop and Condeſcend to be the firſt, yea rejoyce in it and be glad too to help forward or begin ſo acceptable, ſo neceſſary and profitable a Work, could they but ſee any probability, or had any reaſonable Ground, to proſpect its being further proceeded in, or incouraged by others concerned; which otherwiſe you know, would be but as labour in vain, fruitleſs in that reſpect, to offer any ſuch thing where it is not likely to be accepted. But as was already hinted; if every one did joyn with, and ſink down in their minds to that peaceable Power or Wiſdom of God, there would be a great readineſs and propenſity to Reconciliation, and truly till that be known to work both a willingneſs and deſire (in thoſe chiefly concerned) towards the ſame, the difficulty will ſtill remain, tho' many others were very hearty and really much inclined to it.

And to help to anſwer the ſecond part, How ſhall it be carried on? This is propoſed; let all ſuch Friends on both ſides, whoſe hearts the Lord has inclined hereunto, and who are very willing to comply with the aforeſaid, or any other Chriſtian reaſonable Propoſals, they may ſee needful to be concluded on and added with joynt conſent; its hoped that there are divers ſuch, and if they pleaſe they may ſignifie the ſame by Word, or Writing to any Friend, or Friends they think fit to acquaint therewith, tho' its but meet that thoſe alſo ſhould know it, whom they believe are like-minded with them in this Concern: And likewiſe thoſe who have ſo far proceeded in it as to publiſh ſome Propoſals in order to promote the ſame, if they pleaſe, they may apply themſelves to any of us herein concerned, and they may be further ſatisfied about it.

Now by this Method, it may bee ſeen plainly, who are free, willing, and deſirous after a Reconciliation, and who are not; who are the Obſtructers and who the Incouragers of the ſaid on both ſides, and ſo even let the fault and blame herein be laid on thoſe to whom it belongeth, and who do let and hinder ſuch a good Work.

And as to the third part of the Objection, *viz.* That both Parties plead their Innocency, and neither willing to confeſs to be in the fault, or the cauſe of the Difference, but both ſhift it off from themſelves, and throw it upon one another; little need be ſaid of this; for if there be any others (beſide ſome particular Perſons) that do apprehend ſo, that one ſide only is altogether to be blamed, and the other wholly blameleſs, they muſt needs be certainly either very Ignorant of matters, or elſe too deeply engaged more to a Party, than the naked Truth, and ſwayed by ſome more ſiniſter ſelf-intereſt, or by private affection (which blinds the Judgment, and darkens the Underſtanding) than by ſound Reaſon, or an impartial Examination and fair Hearing of things; ſo take all upon meer truſt, believe implicity what ſuch a one ſays, or reports, ſee with others eyes, and not by their own; and beſides, too much to be feared, (which is very bad) they are likewiſe plunged too deeply into that dangerous and hurtful thing, called Prejudice, *&c.* But beſides, were it needful or ſerviceable to any, (as at preſent it is not) the contrary might be fully evinced by too plain Particulars, (to be much lamented) and that by undeniable matters of Fact too, that both ſides, leſs or more are blameable, and have been in the wrong, have been Imprudent and Indiſcreet in managing Matters, have been too Uncharitable, Harſh and Sower, *&c.* one towards another: This is ſo palpable and ſo well known, even to the World, that to mention the ſame in the Particulars (how far ſome on each ſide have digreſſed from both that Golden Rule, from that Royal Law of Love and Kindneſs, and from many other Excellent and Bleſſed Laws, alſo Profeſſed equally by both) would be as well too tedious and large, as it might tend to exaſperate each Party, which all along herein from firſt to laſt of this Work is avoided, as much and as carefully as poſſibly can be, as

to

to any perſonal and particular Reflections, that ſo neither Partiality nor Uncharitableneſs might in the leaſt appear.

However it may be ſafely ſaid (and without any breach of Charity) reaſonably and modeſtly concluded, as being what is but impartial and according to Truth, that it has been viſible to all, and even plain to a demonſtration to all the unbyaſſed, That neither the one nor the other ſide can juſtly plead themſelves wholly clear; but that both leſs or more have offended and given occaſion to each other, of Provocations and of cauſing a Diſreconciliation and this unhappy Separation, either in the firſt Fomenting or Raiſing, or Heightning, and keeping up the Differences, and Controverſies to this day amongſt Friends.

And thoſe who may reckon themſelves cleareſt, or leaſt concerned herein, have no cauſe (if all things be duly and calmly conſidered) to upbraid others, (ſaying) had it not been for the too hot, ungoverned heat, or Zeal of one, or the Impatience and Imprudence of another, or the indiſcreet Conduct, or the Moroſeneſs, Sraitneſs, Sullenneſs, and Shineſs of others, *&c.* it had never been ſo or ſo amongſt us: Now Friends, were it not really more Chriſtian like to lay aſide all manner of aggravations or perſonal reflections, and learn now to be of that excellent Charitable Temper, which we find *Moſes* and *David* were of, that they were not provoked neither to upbraid or be revengeful againſt thoſe, who had ſo inſolently affronted and abuſed them, when they had an opportunity to do either or both towards them. *Moſes*, it is ſaid, *cryed unto the Lord to heal Miriam*, ſaying, *heal her now O God I beſeech thee*; ſhe appears with *Aaron*, had murmured and reflected fooliſhly upon him, which highly provoked the Lord; and when his Hand was laid on her for it, It was then that *Moſes* intreated and interceeded for her; he was ſo far from inſulting over her, or deſiring the puniſhment to be either Continued, Increaſed, or heightned. And as concerning *David*, Sacred Hiſtory gives a large account how merciful, and how exceeding tender hearted he was even towards his great outward Adverſary, *Saul*, and would never by any means take revenge upon him, tho' he might of *Numb.* 12. 13.

ten have easily done it, had he been so disposed. Another great instance we have of his princely Clemency and good nature, after he was restored again to his Kingdom; *Abishai* was mighty importunate, that *Shimei* should be put to Death, because (saith he) *he cursed the Lords anointed*, and indeed he railed at him, and that when he was under adversity, and that was base indeed, most bitterly and extravagantly, saying, *Come out, come out thou Bloody Man, and thou Man of Belial, &c.* yet for all this *David*, that good Man, was so far from revenging himself, or remembring old faults so as to bear any hatred, or improve them to the disadvantage of his offenders, that he reproved those smartly and counted them as his adversaries, that laboured to stir him up to the same, *What have I* (says he) *to do with you, ye Sons of* Zerviah, *that ye should this day be Adversaries to me*, &c. *therefore the King said unto* Shimei *thou shalt not die, and he swear unto him.*

2 *Sam.* 19. 21, 22.

So we may see here was no upbraiding or raking up of old Misdemeanors, or faults of one another, nor the least appearance of a revengeful Spirit, or retaliating again; and therefore it is well advised, and O that all would take the good Counsel in, *Prov.* 24. 29 *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the Man according to his work.* We are to leave that to the Lord; tho' its said he giveth to all Men liberally and upbraideth not; and we are to overcome evil with good. *A soft answer*, saith *Solomon, turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The discretion of a Man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.* Hard to hard (says one) never does well; a gentle Rain will allay a Boisterous Wind; as its unnatural to hate them that love us, so its natural to love them that love us; but its supernatural to love them that hate us; for we are injoyned by Christ, not only to love or salute our Friends, but even our Enemies also; and those of our Friends, whom we esteem as our Enemies we ought so to love them as to forgive them, and be likewise reconciled to them, if possible, at least to use our utmost endeavours for the same, that if it be not effected the fault may be theirs, and not ours. It is a Kingly thing (saith a great King) to bear evil when thou dost good. O Friends, let

Prov. 15. 19. 11.

Plut. in vita Alexandri.

let us all in the love of God, and for his ſake and the truths ſake, which we all jointly profeſs, delay no longer being at Peace one with another, and Cordially reconciled together: We can none of us be inſenſible how many diſadvantages we all lie under, and what grievous Cenſures and Reflections we are all expoſed to, both by profeſſors and prophane; how thoſe common Enemies, both to Truth and us, all rejoyce at our Diviſions, expecting, as [illegible] they may conjecture and conclude, the diſmal Conſequence may be next to hear of our downfall. O how do they warm their Hands at the Fire of our Contentions, and ſay, ha, ha! ſo we would have it.

I. Let us alſo ſeriouſly conſider, how highly provoking theſe things are in the ſight of the Lord. And that it is a great evil that ſo much of Love, and Tenderneſs, Charity, Humility, Patience, Long-ſuffering, *&c.* is profeſſed, pretended to, and talkt of by many, and yet in the mean time ſo very little of theſe in truth, and in deed is practiſed and brought forth in real Fruits of love, *&c.* but a great deal of the Contrary. It may not be long before God, who greatly abhors all ſuch Hypocriſy, and Diſſimulation, take his Rod as well as ſhake it (as he has often and eſpecially of late given us both loud, [illegible] and frequent Warnings) and ſeverely correct and puniſh for theſe things.

Obj. *Let love be without diſſimulation, Rom.* 12. 9. *and let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* 1 *John.* 3. 18.

Doth a Fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet Water and bitter? Can the Fig-tree, my Brethren, bear Olive-berries? Either a Vine, Figs? So can no Fountain both yield ſalt Water and freſh. *Ja.* 3. 11, 12. So that as their Faith is dead, and like the Body without the Soul (that hath no motion) which is without works; even ſo is their Charity, *&c.* but cold and faint without its Demonſtrative effects and Fruits; and ſtill we may rationally conclude whether the Fountain be bitter or ſweet (tho' its eaſy for many) to put the one for the other (as they may imagine) by its ſtreams which flow from it. And hath not the juſt God in all ages, manifeſted his ſoar diſpleaſure, becauſe of ſuch Diviſions, *&c.* Its no wonder, ſays one, if a Father after a long patience be at laſt provoked, to turn all his Children out of Doors, when they cannot be quiet nor agree together; ſo it was heretofore when there was ſuch ſiding one againſt another, Biſhop againſt

againſt Biſhop, ſome engaged in one Faction, ſome in another, till, as one obſerves, the Brethren of the Camp, brought *Dioclefians* perſecution, which devoured them all. Its a common obſervation among Shepherds, that when the Sheep puſh at one another, a ſtorm ſpeedily enſues; and when that comes, it drives them altogether, whereas before they might be ſcattered aſunder, ſome feeding in one place and ſome in another.

II. Moreover, to be plain, Do not theſe Animoſities, Diviſions, and Contentions egregiouſly reflect upon our ſelves, beſpeaking us too plainly to be ſuch as the Apoſtle complained of in his time, who were divided amongſt themſelves? 1 *Cor.* 1. 11, 12, 13. *For,* (ſaith he) *it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren,* (how gently doth he treat them) *that there are contentions amongſt you.* That every one of you ſaith, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Chriſt: Is Chriſt divided? &c.* For *whereas there is among you envying, and ſtrife and d viſions, are ye not Carnal and walk as Men?* And this he repeats to them three times, and in one of them ſays poſitively that they were as yet Carnal; and to draw them off from admiring and following one perſon more than another, to the breach of Concord, he tells them, *who then is* Paul, *and who is* Apollos? *But Miniſters in whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every Man? I have Planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increaſe*; and ſo goes on further upon this in the 7, 8, 9. *&c. verſ.* And tho' the *Galatians* we find were once very zealous in affecting *Paul*, yet (ſaith he) to them, *am I become your enemy becauſe I tell you the truth?* What Turn-coats (obſerves one upon this) were theſe? But a while ſince they would have pulled out their own Eyes, and given them to *Paul*; and now they would have as it were pulled out his Eyes, who told them the truth. *Chap.* 3. 3, 4.

III. And Friends, amongſt many of the diſadvantages which do attend this unhappy Diviſion and Separation, this one is not the leaſt (*viz.*) that as many ſimple, honeſt-hearted Friends on the one Hand are diſappointed of the benefit, and comforts of the Labours and Teſtimonies of thoſe that are ſent amongſt us, and in the Univerſal Love of God are moved to viſit us; ſo on the other hand, many of the Servants of the Lord have been ſtraitned to come amongſt us; becauſe they have

have not that full opportunity of clearing themſelves, and imparting of their ſpiritual gifts to all, as in other parts; ſo that in this reſpect, we among our ſelves, and many others are uſeleſs, and as it were dead to one another, while alive: O how comfortable is it, for the Lords People to meet often together in Love, Peace and Quietneſs, and open their Hearts freely one to another, and tell their experiences one to each other, what the Lord hath done for their Souls. Thus it was once amongſt Friends in this Town, and its hoped it will be ſo again one time or other: After this manner (ſome ſay) the Art of Medicine was firſt found out; as any one met with a Herb and diſcovered the Virtue of it by an accident, he was to Poſt it up, and ſo the Phyſicians ſtill were perfected by a Collection of thoſe Poſted Experiments. But alas, ſome, and too many there are, who are ready to Poſt up, and Publiſh abroad each others weakneſſes and failings or infirmities, to the ſhame and reproach both of themſelves and their Profeſſion.

IV. Let us alſo Conſider, how many have been diſcouraged and ſtumbled from owning the Truth, when they obſerve ſuch an irreconcilable Temper, and have ſuch Wrath and Envy, Enmity and Prejudices, ſuch Wranglings and Diviſions, ſuch Whiſperings, Back-bitings, ſuch Supplanting and Undermining each others Reputations, ſuch malicious Aggravations and improvements of all advantages one againſt another, ſuch uncharitable Cenſures and Apprehenſions, ſuch unfriendly Deportments, unchriſtian-like Treatments, ſuch a ſowr and un-neighbourly-like Behaviour and unhandſome Carriage towards one another, ſuch odious Compariſons, opprobrious Reflections and Characters caſt one upon another, ſuch groundleſs Jealouſies and Surmiſings, *&c.* Its true, Men are but Men, and Women but Women, and the beſt of them may Err, and do amiſs one way or other; but ſuch things as reflect upon a whole Society or Meeting, as being culpable of the aforeſaid, and charged as Guilty thereof, is of far worſe Conſequences than any particular Perſons Miſdemeanour, both by how much the more one ſingle Perſon may ſooner and eaſier Repent, Reform and amend, than many can do; And alſo that Envy and Pride (eſpecially ſpiritual Pride) hath been

been evermore deadly and more hurtful to, and amongſt Gods People, than any other thing.

V. For from thence theſe four great Evils have ſprung up, and which gradually ſucceeded each other in former Ages among the Primitive Chriſtians, & have been ever ſince too much predominant in Chriſtendom; and theſe are, 1ſt. the Ambition or Pride, that firſt appeared then. 2dly Contention with Confuſion followed. 3dly. Afterwards Impoſition of Numerous Creeds one upon another: And laſt and worſt of all, and as the ſad effects of all theſe cruel Perſecutions one of another; all theſe things may be plainly obſerved by thoſe that are acquainted in the leaſt with Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, as of *Euſebius*, *Socrates*, &c. *Geo. Biſhops* Looking-Glaſs for the Times, *&c.* a ſpecial Book.

Now Friends, have not all theſe things happened, all theſe Diſorders Diviſions and Confuſions, *&c.* by not keeping near to the Lord, in Unity, and near one to another, and being gone from the meaſure of that divine Light and Grace, in their own Hearts; then there was a departure from the Charity and into harſh Apprehenſions and Conſtructions one againſt another; and not being content with that place and Station, the Lord allotted for them, then an aſpiring mind got up and ſought to be higher, then there was a Grudging and Envying others, and thus alſo the Humility was loſt, and ſo all Love and Tenderneſs one towards another decay'd: Loftineſs of Spirit with hardneſs of Heart prevailed, even to the grieving and vexing, both of the Spirit of God in themſelves, and alſo of one another; ſo that there could be no longer any more comfortable Society, or Chriſtian Fellowſhip together, the great Bond of Peace being broke, and that Heavenly inviſible Tye, which Knits together being diſſolved: What then behoved to follow but Diviſions and ſeparations one from another? We may likewiſe read how the Apoſtle blames the *Corinthians*, for their being of ſo Contentious and Striving humour, inſomuch that thereby they reduced themſelves to this at laſt, that thoſe were ſet up even as their Judges, who were leaſt eſteemed of in the Church (and God knows how many raw, young, unexperienced ſort of Perſons are got up, or ſet up of late into the Judgment Seat amongſt us in this our Day) and we wiſh that there

1 *Cor.* 6. 7.

there were not cauſe to ſay the ſame, as he tells them plainly thus; I ſpeak to your ſhame, is it ſo that there is not a Wiſe Man, (nor a patient Condeſcending bearing Man) among you;no,not one that is able to Judge between his Brethren, *&c.* why do you not rather take wrong than,(as if he had ſaid)be thus Litigious, Striving, Quarrelſome, even to go to Law one with another, and that before the Unbelievers too? which was utterly a fault(as he ſays)amongſt them: He ſaith alſo, that the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not conſumed one of another.* Gal. 5. 14. 15.

VII. But to leave theſe things, relating to former Times, and much more that might be mentioned, let all beware, and take warning in time to come of ſplitting on the ſame Rock, as others before us have done, both in this and former Ages, and let the Cauſe wherever it is, or whatever it be, or has been, be ſearched out by every particular, and labour by the power of God, to have it removed, and then no doubt, but all theſe ſad evil and hurtful effects that proceed there from, will quickly ceaſe and come to an end.

Object. 2d. Some alſo may be ready to argue thus, and ſay, It is altogether vain to ſuppoſe or expect that all Differences, Contentions, or Quarrels upon a Religious action, can ever be Compoſed ſo, as to be brought to one end; and it may be ſaid of them, as the Apoſtle ſpoke of Hereſies, which he ſaid muſt be amongſt the *Corinthians*, *That they which were approved,may be made manifeſt*,tho' its true at the ſame time,he blamed them for their Diviſions, *&c.* 1 Cor. 11. 19.

Anſw. But one may as well reaſon, and ſay,that becauſe thou knoweſt there is already a Fire broke out, and that one tells thee there will be another after that, that therefore thou oughſt not to endeavour what poſſibly thou canſt to help to extinguiſh both that or any other Fires, that might be ſuppoſed for certain would happen ſtill one after another;ſo the Apoſtle does not by the aforeſaid Text deſign to diſcourage any from labouring to heal breaches, to remedy diviſions, to ſtop Contentions, and to make Peace and Reconciliation, but (as obſerved by a late Author upon the aforeſaid Scripture) he declares plainly what

we muſt expect from the ill diſpoſition of the Spirits of Men, (which is the cauſe of the diſunion) by reaſon of the high eſteem they have of their own ſufficiency, and of their inclination to render themſelves conſiderable, &c. The Providence of God is hereby is alſo ſeen, which draws good out of evil, and light out of darkneſs, the thickeſt darkneſs, and to diſtinguiſh ſuc has truly belong truly to him, and that Faithfulneſs and Conſtancy manifeſted. In this ſenſe alſo it is (ſaith he) that Jeſus Chriſt declares to us, the neceſſity of Scandals and Tribulations ariſing in the Church, otherways the Goſpel, which is the Miniſtry, of Grace, and a word of Reconciliation and Peace, does not of it ſelf purpoſe any thing, but Union, Amity and Concord. Beſides, the Apoſtle did not ſay, that there muſt always be Hereſies, or forever in the Church of Chriſt: Is it not enough, that it has taken place for ſo many Ages, it is not time now to ſtop its Courſe, and ſee an end of it? So will the Prophecy have had its accompliſhment in our Fathers Days, and ſhall in ours enjoy the Calm after all theſe Tempeſts. Let us add hereunto, that as the Scripture foretels us theſe Diviſions, ſo it alſo makes us hope for an Eſtate of Peace and Quiet in the Church. It makes Times of refreſhment and eaſe to ſucceed all theſe great diſturbances, and aſſures us that there ſhall be ſuch a firm Peace in the Earth, that we ſhall ſee the Woolf dwell with the Lamb, &c.

For it is propheſied, *That in the laſt days the Mountains of the*
Iſa. 2.3,4. *Lords Houſe, ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the Hills, and that the Lord himſelf ſhall judge among the Nations, and rebuke many People, and they ſhall beat their Swords into Plow-ſhears, and their Spears into pruning-hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn*
Iſa. 11. 9. *War any more:* And it is ſaid alſo, *That they ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my Holy Mountain.* O this will be a bleſſed day, and happy Times indeed, when all that which hurts or deſtroys upon any account, comes to be deſtroyed, and reproved: Then may it be hoped that all theſe many uncomfortable and fruitleſs Contentions, Controverſies and Quarrels will come to an end true, and Love, Peace, Concord, Union, and Reconciliation, prevail and take place. Which, *O God of Infinite Love haſten to bring*

bring to paſs amongſt us and all People every where, for thy Dear Son Jeſus Chriſt his ſake, who is the great Prince of Peace, who came to Reconcile Mankind to thee, and one to another, and who taſted Death for every Man, and ſhed his moſt precious Blood, by and through which all might be brought nigh to the Lord, and one to another, out of all the enmity, ſtrife, variance, hatred, prejudice and envy, and to live together in Love, Peace, and Friendſhip in his pure fear and holy dread, to the praiſe of his great Name, who over all and by all is alone worthy to be Reverenced and renowned, exalted and adored forever and ever more. Amen.

Object. 3*d.* There is another Objection ſtill behind to be anſwered, and that is, if it be ſaid, ſuppoſe all be true as above cited concerning both parties to be leſs or more blame-worthy, yet ought not thoſe who are moſt in the wrong, and have been the greateſt cauſe of thoſe Jumbles, *&c.* and given the lighteſt Provocations in divers reſpects, ſhould not theſe begin firſt, and acknowledg, *&c.* Whatever weight this may have (as is uſually urged amongſt the great and proud ones, and State-Politicians of this World, whoſe Grandeur and Honour makes them very loath to bend or bow one to another; when they have quarrelled, one thinks it below him (and ſo another the ſame) to ſubmit firſt; yet ſure it ought not to have any place amongſt us or any true Chriſtians.

Anſ. All muſt conclude this to be a good work, to make Peace or Reconciliation. Now Friends, which of the two is really moſt capable firſt to begin the ſame, thoſe that have moſt, or thoſe that have leaſt tranſgreſſed? whom ſhall we expect to be moſt Inſtrumental herein? But certainly whoever they are that begin firſt, and endeavour moſt to promote this bleſſed Work, whether they are the moſt or leaſt to be blamed, will however in this deſerve to be moſt praiſed and commended, and will conduce moſt both to their true Peace and Honour, and never will have cauſe to repent how forward, how humble and condeſcending they were in this matter, and are willing, though in many things innocent, to come under, and ſeem more to be blamed than really they deſerve. Let us remember what *Paul* that humble Apoſtle

ſaid, and how far he condeſcended to be made all things to all Men.

1 Cor. 9. 22. *To the weak he became as weak, &c.* We know that Condeſcention, Lowlineſs, Tenderneſs, Humility, *&c.* is very much both commended and pretended to by many; but alas, is it not as little practiſed? Now here is a Trial for us all, who will be really moſt in the Chriſtian exerciſe of it. However it will be well for thoſe that do their part; and if others refuſe to do theirs and be obſtinate, churliſh, refractory, ſtiff and, wilful and appear ſtill implacable, captious and Irreconcilable, let them look to it, the weight of it will certainly be heavy on their Heads at laſt. And whoever they are (here are none named) that have been or ſtill are the chief occaſion, or cauſe of being a let to, and preventing of Reconciliation, and of its being ſtopped, and not proſecuted nor accompliſhed amongſt us, doubtleſs the Lord God the moſt Juſt, Righteous and impartial Judg of all, who is no reſpecter of Perſons, will require it of them one day, and call them to an account, and they muſt anſwer to him for it; and unleſs in time repented of, they muſt bear the weight of it, however at preſent, or for a time they may ſlight it and put it off, at an overly rate, and account themſelves Innocent, as thoſe of old did, tho' they were very guilty, and yet had great confidences, in whoſe very *skirts was found the Blood of the Souls of the poor Innocents*: (O the Blood of the Souls of many poor Innocents that have been hurt and wounded on the one Hand, and ſtumbled on the other Hand by theſe things amongſt us) and inſtead of purſuing Peace, do reject all Chriſtian and reaſonable offers of making Peace; ſo let all ſuch as find themſelves concerned herein, whoſoever they be, look about them and ſee to it in time, if ſo be as yet it be not too late, for really the Matter is of greater importance and of a far weightier concern and conſequence than poſſibly they may at preſent be aware of. But there is another objection ſtill, and which is the laſt tho' none of the leaſt or weakeſt, but what may ſeem to ſome to be the moſt weighty of all, and its thus farely ſtated.

Jer. 2. 35. &c.

Obj.

Obj. 4. It may then be ſaid by ſome, To what purpoſe ſhould we ſo much as think of meeting all together again, either in the old publick Meeting-houſe or any where elſe, *UNLESS* there might be firſt ſome certain ground to expect, that our meetings would be more quiet, peaceable, and comfortable to us than they were ſome time before we parted? It is not yet forgot by many amongſt us, what ſad Diſtractions and Confuſions, what publick Oppoſitions and open Contentions, Smitings and Claſhings appeared in our ſolemn Aſſemblies, when we came together to wait upon and worſhip the great God: O what ſad Reflections and aggravations one againſt another, both to the great diſhonour of the Name of the Lord, and alſo to our ſhame and reproach of our holy profeſsion? And with what grief and ſorrow of Heart did theſe things cauſe many to go away from each other in a mournful condition, to ſee ſome bitterly exaſperated and inflamed one againſt another, others grievouſly wounded, and not a few ſtumbled, inſomuch that ſome might with a bowed down Spirit cry out and ſay, O that I had a Cottage in the Wilderneſs, or that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might flee away and be at reſt: Now the thing is thus, and here lies indeed the great Obſtruction, ſay ſome: In ſhort its this, we are jealous and affraid that it will be ſo again, and till we be ſure that we can meet together in the ſame ancient love and life of Truth as in the beginning, better it is for us to continue as it is and where we are.

Anſ. By no means Friends, pray do not reaſon ſo; and to avoid all manner of Controverſie, it is not proper here to enter into the merit of the cauſe of theſe Quarrels, Confuſions, *&c.* on either Hand: However let not the remedy be worſe than the diſeaſe, neither ought any upon what pretence ſoever to do evil that good may come; do you think that we ever can be brought near in Love and Friendſhip one to and with another by keeping ſtill at a diſtance, and by being as it were afraid of each other? Let us all but once lay aſide our Fears, Jealouſies, Doubts and Reaſonings, and in that Faith which can remove Mountains let us come once more all together again, and wait in the Faith, and ſee what may be the Bleſſed effects thereof; who knows but that

that it may be a good means of raiſing that ancient Love and Life amongſt us, which is ſtronger than Death it ſelf? Pray conſider what hurt will it be to try this expedient, and if it doth not anſwer what's propoſed or deſired, we will be but where we were before, and where now we are: If you ſeriouſly compare the advantages of being altogether, and the diſadvantages in many reſpects of meeting aſunder, or on the contrary, the ſuppoſed Conveniences of the latter, with the real and great inconveniences of the former, ſurely there is great odds either way, and the one ſhould reaſonably be thought quickly to overballance the other; that is to ſay, there is a great deal more can be ſaid for meeting all together, than can be alledged to the contrary: And ſuppoſe (upon trial) it ſhould prove to be as formerly, and as objected, we can (as is ſaid) but meet aſunder again as now we do, if there ſhould not be that Prudence, Patience and Charity to bear up and carry through it all: And we ſhall however have this advantage by it, to be more excuſable both in the ſight of God, and all ſober impartial People, when they ſee we have tried all poſſible means in order to obtain a Reconciliation, and to have peaceable and quiet Meetings together: And beſides, if the ſame cannot be had, it may be the more manifeſt what has been or is ſtill the cauſe or occaſion thereof. But is it not to be hoped and reaſonably expected, that moſt Friends on both ſides are by this time heartily inclined to Reconciliation, and to mannage matters with more Wiſdom and Prudence, and with more Moderation and Diſcretion, and as it was agreed to, that all occaſions of publick differences, as much as in us lies, be avoided on all Hands, for time to come, and that the truth or Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus be only and alone declared and preached to and amongſt Friends and People, and all Perſonal Reflections or Matters Diſputable or in Controverſy laid aſide, or at leaſt ſuſpended for a time, and diſcourſed of more privately, and that they will keep the Feaſts not with the old ſower Leaven, neither with the Leaven of malice, *&c.* that none ſhall have cauſe any more, either to ask what are theſe wounds in thine Hands? Nor any to Anſwer; *Thoſe with which I was wounded in the Houſe of my Friends.*

Zech. 13.6.

And

And tho' it was ſo or ſo before, as aboveſaid: It does not therefore follow, that it ſhould always be ſo. Certainly Friends, there is neither a neceſſity nor any reaſon for it; unleſs it be an unhappy Fate of ſome perſons, that can no more live without Contention, than the *Salamander* can live but in the Flames of Fire, as is ſaid, or a Fiſh in Water. Have we not all had time and leiſure enough to bethink our ſelves, and come into a more calm, ſedate, cool and temperate frame of Spirit, and to be at leaſt more patient, and ſo wiſe and unconcerned with theſe things that do but diſturb our inward Peace, and diſquiet our Minds, if any imprudently or indiſcreetly do manage Matters or run into unſeemly Reflections, in bearing, and prudently, ſlighting Provocations, as if they were not given, or no notice taken of them, and then they will be ſure to return on themſelves that give them (if not at all minded) with a double weight, and in time make them weary of them? If we cannot be ſo charitable in being ſo friendly, kind and loving one to another, as we ought to be, and as we ought to live together as Brethren, let us however for our own particular Content and quiet, bear and contemn all Injuries, *&c.* ſatisfying our ſelves as well as the Apoſtle *Paul*, who ſeemed not at all to be diſturbed or diſquieted with the raſh Cenſures of others, who had this to anſwer as a Salve to them all, who ſaith in 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. *But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of Mans Judgment, &c.* So let all concerned ſeriouſly conſider of what is here in univerſal good will and true tender love to all propoſed, before it be too late, and our differences prove as fatal to us or any of us, upon a ſpiritual account, as its reported that War did upon a temporal account to the Duke of *Burgundy*, which began between him and the *Swiſſers* for a very ſmall trifle, even but for a load of Sheepskins, wherein the Duke (refuſing all offers of accord) loſt in three Battels, Honour, Life and Wealth; on which the Hiſtorian makes this Obſervation, not unſuitable to the preſent ſubject. Of how great (ſays he) advantage to us while we are in this World, is Moderation, whereby even eaſily thoſe differences are accommodated, and miſchiefs avoided, which our frowardneſs and obſtinacy, widen unmeaſurably and many times

See Hiſtorical Contemplations, Pag. 55.

times involve us in utter ruin paſt recovery. It is ſaid in *Judges* 5. 15, 16. *For the Diviſions of* Reuben *there were great thoughts of Heart. For the Diviſions of* Reuben *there were great ſearchings of Heart.* And may it not be ſaid alſo that for our ſad Diviſions, the grievous Diſtractions, Quarrels, *&c.* in this place there has been, and ſtill there are great thoughts of concerning the ſame; whatever true ſearchings of Heart have been, or however ſurely ought to have been, and yet ſtill one time or other muſt be, even after the Cauſe, or what that has been which hath occaſioned and continued theſe things, ſo as to this very day they are amongſt us; and O that the Lord would be pleaſed yet more and more both to ſearch that out, and alſo remove it whatever it be, and whereever it is, which hinders our Peace, Concord and Reconciliation together both here and every where.

And Friends, muſt not this at laſt be the Reſult of all, and be concluded on by all the impartial and unbyaſſed on every Hand, that the whole fault and the greateſt and moſt principal Cauſe, why Peace and Reconciliation is not obtained, nor can be at preſent effected and brought to paſs, muſt be laid on ſome few particular perſons, and we wiſh there be not ſuch a deep rooted and inveterate prejudice, and irreconcilable Rancor and Enmity between them, as ſome have obſerved and lamented: Inſomuch that they cannot look upon one another with a friendly Countenance, nor converſe together neither upon a Religious or civil account. But we forbear to mention any Names: So that the cunning, crafty, and ſubtile Contrivances and deſigns of ſome who carry on their own private ends, and politick projects of exalting themſelves, and drive on under ſpecious pretences ſome ſiniſter or popular intereſt, together with the Whiſperings, Backbitings and Surmiſings, of tatling buſie Bodies, whoſe chief buſineſs is to beget Jealouſies and hard thoughts, *&c.* one againſt another, has been none of the leaſt of the Engins and Methods which the grand Diſturber and Enemy of us all hath uſed both firſt, to foment, and alſo to keep up and heighten differences, and then to divide, rend, and break into pieces, and run into parties one after another, which alas,

many

many are more zealous to maintain, when once engaged therein, either by affection, intereſt, or relation, and are more eager and earneſt by far to promote the ſame, than purely the intereſt of naked Truth it ſelf.

And is it not a great pity that ſuch a ſubſtantial commodious Meeting-houſe as the old one is, both for Situation, Largeneſs, and ſeveral other Conveniences, ſhould altogether be as uſeleſs, and lie waſte and deſolate, as already for ſome years, and may be more (a great injury both to the living and the dead) and in the mean time Friends on both ſides put to the charge and inconveniency of having two diſtinct publick Meeting-places? O how will ſome be able to anſwer for this in the day of the Lord!

SECT. IV.

Some Friendly Counſel and tender advice to Profeſſors of Truth, with one or two more ſubſtantial Teſtimonies.

I. LEt us therefore, Friends, every one of us lay aſide all manner of Peeviſhneſs of Spirit, and let not a haughty kind of a ſullen moroſe Humor prevail upon any of us, neither let an impatient, inſolent, or inſulting Temper appear in us: But let us all be as tender and complying, as affectionate and good natured towards all, as poſſibly we can be, that ſo by an obliging Civility and courteous Behaviour, as well as a melting kindneſs, it may be apparent that we do ſincerely deſire the good and well-fair one of another.

And were we all but once brought to be of this excellent and truly Chriſtian-like Temper, *viz.* to judg charitably, to bear patiently, to be moderately inclined, freely and fully to forgive, tenderly compaſſionate, meekly condeſcend, and

humbly ſubmit to, and prefer one another; then we ſhould ſoon ſee things grow better amongſt us; then there would not be ſuch ſhyneſs, diſtance, and ſtraitneſs, nor ſuch Contentions, Confuſions, Diſtractions, *&c.* amongſt us.

And had it not been for theſe evil, hurtful, and ſtumbling practices, would not the Truth have prevailed generally in this place, as much as in any? And before theſe ſad diviſions happened, were there many Country Meetings, like to this here, and that in divers reſpects both for freſhneſs and largeneſs? And certainly could it ever have come to ſuch a loſs, either as to the one or the other, had that Innocency, Lowlineſs, Simplicity, Lamb-like nature, Tenderneſs and Charity, which firſt appeared, been really by all kept to, which alas for ſome time paſt has been too much on the decaying hand, and in the place thereof too much of Human Wiſdom, Carnal Policy, Subtile Contrivances, and Cunning Projects, together with Sourneſs, Loftineſs, Prejudice, Enmity, Envy, Self exaltation, *&c.* hath alas too much prevailed, as to ſome here, and been on the increaſing hand; Inſomuch that the one, *viz.* the latter, hath even almoſt overpowered the other.

Obſ. *But the Bleſſed Truth is ſtill the ſame as ever, and muſt not be blamed for theſe things.*

O Friends, this indeed is ſad and very grievous to conſider, but it is really too true (tho' a mournful) obſervation. And would to God that it could be proved by any to be but either a miſtake or a miſrepreſentation, or a too raſh Concluſion, or ſevere groundleſs Cenſure, or what might be ſuppoſed, to be but the product of diſſatisfaction or prejudice, as doubtleſs ſome will be ready enough to judge ſo.

But the Inſtances & Effects of the aforeſaid (the greater is the pity) being ſo publick and notoriouſly ſeen and obſerved, as they have been and are, and that too almoſt dayly, There is neither that ground to ſuggeſt any one of theſe as other ways there might be, nor can any rationally conclude, that what is here mentioned only in general concerning the ſame, is done either from Malice or Ill-will towards any: And there are but few (if any) amongſt us here, but muſt confeſs to the Truth thereof, and that it is too often manifeſt in one Action or other, which ought indeed to be much lamented by all the ſincere & honeſt hearted Friends

of

of Truth; and ſurely it is cauſe of great grief and ſorrow to all ſuch as conſider of things, both ſeriouſly and impartially, and are of one Univerſal publick Spirit, and concerned for the good of all, and not byaſſed to intereſts or parties, *&c.* And Friends, happy would we all be, that as we profeſs to be followers of bleſſed Jeſus, *who ſuffer'd for us, leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps*, ſo we may really demonſtrate that we are truly ſuch as imitate him, *and that the ſame mind be in us, which was in him, who (though he did no Sin, neither was Guile ever found in his Mouth) yet when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered he threatned not, but committed himſelf to him that Judgeth righteouſly*, and moſt meekly and patiently endured the contradictions of Sinners, and pray'd (according to his own injunction to us) for his enemies, even thoſe that Crucified him, and ſaid, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

1 *Pet.* 2, 21, 23.

Luke 23, 25.

And as holy the Apoſtle, after he had with a great deal of excellent good arguments pleaded for Compaſſion and Condeſcenſion, as in *Rom.* 13. In the Wiſdom of God he gave forth this Concluſion and Determination, in the firſt Verſe of the next Chap. *We then* (ſays he) *that are ſtrong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe our ſelves. Let every of us pleaſe his Neighbour for his good, to Edification; for,* (obſerve) *even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me.*

And thoſe that are ſtronger and wiſer than others, muſt we not alſo bear with ſome of their natural infirmities ſometimes? for where is the Man, or Woman wholly exempt or free from them? but leſs or more for want of that due and conſtant watchfulneſs one time or other, appears in them; and therefore the ſame Apoſtle tenderly counſelled the *Galatians* to *bear one anothers Burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt. For if any Man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.*

Gal. 6. 2, 3.

Which, if rightly conſidered, none have cauſe to be proud, ſelfconceited or exalted in themſelves. And to prevent and exclude all vain glorious boaſting, or inſulting, or being lifted up, either upon a ſpiritual or temporal account in any,

whatever may be their Gifts, Attainments, Abilities, or Qualifications, let the beſt, the wiſeſt, the ſtrongeſt or richeſt Man or Woman, ponder ſeriouſly in their minds, but theſe two or three Queries of the Apoſtle *Paul* in his own words, or rather ſuch as God by his Spirit moved him to utter, and anſwer them, ſo as they ſhould be, and ſee then if they can juſtly brag, or vainly boaſt or inſult over others.

1 *Cor.*4,5, 6,7. 6. The Apoſtle, after he had given the *Corinthians* a very ſeaſonable caution in the beginning of the 1ſt. *Ch.* to beware of raſh, cenſorious and forward Judging one another: Next of too fondly or fooliſhly admiring any Mans Perſon, as in the 6th, Verſe, *Theſe things* (ſays he) *Brethren, I have in a figure transferred to my ſelf, and to Apollo, for your ſakes, that ye might learn in us* (obſerve) *not to think of Men above that which is written, That no one of you be puffed up one againſt another.* Then in the next Verſe he comes to his cloſe Queries. *For who maketh thee* (O Man, or O Woman whoſoever thou be) *to differ from another?* 2dly. *And what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive it?* (As moſt certain it is we all have received, whatever we enjoy or whatever we are upon any account, it is from him, and by him, the great and bleſſed Benefactor to all mankind, from whom all good and perfect gifts come, and who is rich and liberal to all) But 3dly. Why doſt thou then glory, as if thou hadſt not received it?

Or as in the Margin diſtinguiſheth.

Ja.4.16. 7. So it ſeems, there were ſome in his days that were puffed up, and forgot both the giver and themſelves too, and its like were ready to trample upon, rejoyce, and inſult over others, as if they had merited what they were, and what they enjoyed; for ſome rejoyced in their boaſting, which was evil rejoycing. Now ſays the Apoſtle to them in *verſe* 8. *Ye are full now, ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign, that we might alſo reign with you: We are fools for Chriſts ſake, but ye are wiſe*, &c.

*Ch.*10, 12. 13. *verſe.* And the ſame Apoſtle ſays in the ſame Epiſtle, *Let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall; for there hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common or incident,* (as the margine hath it) *to Man*; Conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted; and as in the 13th. *Chap.* to the *Heb.* in another Cauſe, *as being*

your

your ſelves alſo in the Body. For whatever happens to one Man, may happen to every Man.

And had that Chriſtian good advice taken place, or yet could be regarded and followed, which was given ſome years ago, by a very good tender-hearted devoutand ancient Friend, Loved and Reſpected, (by moſt, if not all that knew him) it would neither ever have been ſo as it has been, nor would it continue long ſo, as now it is amongſt us.

Its worth both the pains of Tranſcribing & ſeriouſly peruſing, is as followeth, *viz.* 'Let all ſtrive to excell in tenderneſs and 'and long-ſuffering, and to be kept out of hard and evil 'thoughts one of another, and from harſh interpretations, con-'cerning any thing relating to one another. Oh this is un-'worthy to be found in an *Iſraelite* towards an *Egyptian*, but 'exceeding ſhameful and inexcuſable to be found in one Bro-'ther towards another. How many weakneſſes doth the Lord 'paſs by in us, how ready is he to interpret every thing well 'concerning his Diſciples, that may bare a good Interpreta-'tion? The Spirit, ſaith he is willing, but the fleſh is weak, when 'they had been all ſcatteredfrom him upon his death, he did not 'afterwards upbraid them, but ſweetly gathered them again. 'O dear Friends, have we received the ſame Life of ſweetneſs, 'let us bring forth the ſame ſweet fruits, being ready to ex-'cuſe and receive what may tend towards the excuſe 'of another in any doubtful Cauſe; and where there 'is any evil manifeſt, O wait to overcome it with good: O let 'us not ſpend the ſtrength of our Spirits, in crying out of 'one another, becauſe of evil, but watch, and wait where 'the Mercy and healing Vertue will pleaſe to ariſe: So the 'living God, the God of *Iſrael*, the God of everlaſting ten-'Bowels and Compaſſions to *Iſrael*, fill the Veſſels of his He-'ritage with his Life, and cauſe the Peace and Love of his 'holy Nature and Spirit to deſcend upon their dwellings, and 'to ſpring up powerfully in them towards his living Truth 'and towards one another. O Lord my God, when thou haſt 'ſhewn the wants of *Iſrael* in any kind ſufficiently (whether 'in the particular or in the general,) bring forth the ſupply 'thereof from thy fulneſs, ſo ordering it in thine eternal Wiſ-'dom, that all may be aſhamed & abaſed before thee, & thy Name

praiſed

praiſed in and over all. See the Book called *many deep Conſiderations*, &c.

VIII. One more Teſtimony, and it is of a ſingular perſon, as profound in the knowledg, both of Natural and Supernatural or Heavenly Divine Myſteries, as any in this age; And indeed there are but few that can equal or come near him in either.

Whoſe name as well as the formers is omitted, becauſe ſome may like the Matter of both their Teſtimonies, but may be (tho' groundleſly) prejudiced againſt them otherwiſe; and poſſibly the greateſt reaſon they can give for it is, becauſe they were or are not of their party, as uſually is ſaid, ſuch a one, is a good Man, and ſuch a one is a wiſe diſcreet Man: But ſtill there follows an *if* and a *but* he is of this or the other ſide, Opinion, *&c.* This brings to my remembrance what one obſerves, that under the Papacy, any Sins find eaſy abſolution if the perſon be not ſuſpected of Proteſtantiſm, and any Opinions have tolerable favour, if not degenerated from Papal Authority. How often (beſides by *Jehu*) hath that queſtion been paſt, Who is on my ſide? And if the party have been right for that Cauſe, if his Religion be that of *Mahomet*, or his life like that of *Apicius*, he need not doubt but he ſhall find fair entertainment.

IX. But to return to the Matter before propoſed: It would be too large to inſert the whole Teſtimony, (being two or three Pages) here is the laſt and leaſt part of it, but what is very material and of a general Service to all, and would help much to put a final end to all Controverſies, Diſputes, *&c.* if practiſed; if this (ſays he) were but one received amongſt thoſe called Chriſtians, and that nothing ſhould be required by one ſort from another, as an Article of Faith, or Doctrin, or Principle of the Chriſtian Religion, in common to be believed, but as what is expreſly delivered in the Scriptures, in plain Scripture terms, of how great advantage might it be to a true Reconcilement amonſt them, and beget true Chriſtian Unity, Peace, Love, and Concord? And as for the conſequential part of peculiar Doctrins, whether true or falſe, to leave every one a freedom, without impoſing upon them the Affirmative, or Negative, as any Bond or Tye

of

of Christian fellowship (this is a purely Primitive, and truly Apostolick like Testimony) for if such consequential Doctrin be false, it is most unreasonable to impose it, and therefore in that Case a Dissenter should have his liberty to differ in Judgment, and without any Breach of Brotherly Unity and Society : And if it be true, yet not being opened or revealed to another, it cannot be in Justice, pressed or urged upon him where God has not given him the true freedom and clearness of Mind to receive it; and to do otherwise (that is, to Impose, Press, or urge any thing, that is purely Matter of Conscience, upon any) is to transgress that Golden Rule, delivered by *Paul*, *viz.* To walk by the same Rule according to what we have attained. And if any be otherwise minded, says he, God will reveal it to him; and if this advice could find place (and a great pity but it should amongst all) it would bring the Differences amongst those called Christians, in point of Judgment, into a very small and narrow compass, and they would understand one another far better than now they do. *Obj.*

THE CONCLUSION.

I. But now to conclude the whole (for indeed a great deal more might be enlarged on this Subject, but have already much exceeded, by what was at first intended in this Expostulation and perswasive, *&c.*) remember what the Apostle tenderly exhorts unto : Brethren (says he) if any Man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are Spiritual, restore, (not rejoyce, or insult over) such a one : And how ? In the Spirit of Meekness; not then in the Spirit of Ruggedness, Harshness, Uncharitableness, *&c.* And why ? Because considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted; bear ye one anothers Burthens, and so fulfil the Royal Law, and with all Lowliness and Meekness, forbearing one another in love.

II. And above and beyond all, let us hear, hearken to and obey what our great and Blessed Lord and Master Christ Jesus Commands us, *Take my Yoke* (saith he) *upon you, and learn of me, for I am Meek and Lowly in Heart*, *Mat.* 11. 29. He is the best Master that ever was or can be, and a most blessed and profitable Lesson for all to Learn, *to be Meek and Lowly*, and of a Patient Spirit. Which all Christs Scholars, or such as are Disciplined in his School, are instructed in : And says he also,

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A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And in the next Verse he presses the same again, *and have peace one with another. Ye have heard it hath been said, an Eye for an Eye, &c. but I say unto you resist not evil*; and be *Merciful, as your Father also is Merciful.* *Judg not, and ye shall not be Judged: Condemn not and ye shall not be Condemned*, which must needs relate to unjust, sower and uncharitable Judgment, *&c.* as by these following words; *forgive and ye shall be forgiven, and have Peace one with another.*

John 13. 34.

Luke 6.36, 37.

3. If all Friends would but look well at home, examine Matters there Impartially, and mind the Prosperity of Truth, and of the work of God to be carried on in their own Hearts, and be more concerned to feel all that Judged down and wrought out in themselves by his pure eternal power, which is contrary to him and obstructs their inward Peace, with him were every one thus truly and daily exercised, as they ought to be, then certainly they would not look out so much at others, or be so Uncharitably Censorious in their severe and harsh Judging and condemning of others, who possibly may be at last in the great day of the Lord, found to be more justified and approved of by him the great Judg of all, than they themselves may be; for his ways and thoughts are not as Mans ways and thoughts are, neither are his doings like unto Mortals; but as there is as great, if not a greater Disproportion, betwixt the one and the other, as there is distance between Heaven and Earth, so oftententimes it has proved to be too true, that those whom Men do Countenance, Reject, Condemn and Judg as Reprobates, may be Countenanced, Received, and Chosen of the Lord, And so on the contrary Hand whom Men may Commend, *&c.* by God may be Discommended, Disowned, *&c.*

And now the God of Love and Peace, grant a Reconciliation together amongst all Friends, that do profess his Holy, Peaceable Truth; and that the Hearts of all may be sincerely disposed, and cordially inclined thereunto, that so we may all call upon his reverent pure Name, and serve him with one Consent; and that *being like minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, we may with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* *Rom.* 15. 5, 6. This is the earnest and fervent desire of him, who is an impartial Friend and Well-wisher to all. *R. S.*

POSTSCRIPT

Containing an Advertiſement, *with ſomething further relating to the aforeſaid* Expoſtulation, *&c.*

I. *BE pleaſed to Obſerve (Friendly Reader) in order to prevent any groundleſs miſapprehenſions, and to remove miſtakes, That notwithſtanding of what is ſo largely expreſſed, as with reſpect to a meek, charitable bearing and forgiving each other,* &c. *we do not however in the leaſt hereby intend that whatever hath appeared, doth or may appear in any that is manifeſtly contrary to, and inconſiſtent with the Holy, Pure Truth profeſſed amongſt us, ought to be Connived at, or Countenanced, without a faithful Teſtimony given forth againſt the ſame, according to Goſpel order, as likewiſe even againſt thoſe who do act above their proper Sphere, and out of their places in the Concerns of Truth, by exalting themſelves beyond their Stations in the Church of Chriſt, in which the Lord hath placed them, and in all humility ought to abide, and in lowlineſs of mind therein keep, but by departing therefrom, as too many have done in all Ages, and as in this of ours ſome do, hath cauſed much trouble and exerciſes to the Lords People, and hath been one of the chiefeſt occaſions of the Diviſions, Contentions, Strifes and Animoſities amongſt them; ſuch ought to be Cautioned and Adviſed, and alſo Warned of the great Hurt and Prejudice they do in many reſpects, both to themſelves and others, and if they continue ſtiff and obſtinate, and inſtead of receiving the tender Council and Admonition from any Friend, or Friends, concerned in the Love of God, to give the ſame, they rather grow higher minded and more into ſelf Exaltation, Conceitedneſs, and ſpiritual Pride, they are then to be zealouſly detected and teſtified againſt: But ſtill we ſay all this ſhould be done in the Spirit of Love and Meekneſs, and with true Chriſtian Prudence and Diſcretion, and nothing given away to harbour in the leaſt any Perſonal Prejudice or Enmity on the one hand, (which is to be as care-*

fully watched against as Partiality or Hypocriſie, two great Evils, and too ready on the other hand to creep in.)

II. *That ſo upon the Reforming, growing better, and mending what has been amiſs in any upon any account, there may be both a friendly and kind receiving and embracing one another again into true Love, Friendſhip and Unity, and alſo in that ſweet Chriſtian and Charitable frame of ſpirit, forgive whats paſt, and never upbraid or remember it any more againſt them. It is ſaid in* Eccleſ. 28. 2, 3. *Forgive thy Neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, ſo ſhall thy Sins be forgiven, when thou prayeſt. One Man beareth hatred againſt another, and doth he ſeek pardon from the Lord? he ſheweth no mercy to a Man that is like himſelf, and doth he ask forgiveneſs of his own Sins?*

See Charrons *Book of Wiſdom* chap. 34. page 104.

III. *There is nothing* (*as* Charron *well obſerves*) *ſo honourable as to know how to Pardon: To give Grace, to Remit and Forgive, belongeth to a Soveraign Prince, if thou wilt be a King of Kings themſelves, do an act that may become a King: Pardon freely, be Gracious towards him that offendeth thee: But indeed if God were not more merciful and favourable, of greater Compaſſion and Pity towards us, than we are often towards one another, alas who then could be ſaved? For have we not all greatly grieved and provoked him, much more than any can provoke or grieve us? Is it not very unbecoming for us to be Quarrelling and be Implacable one towards another when he is both willing and ready to be Reconciled to, and at Peace with us, after ſuch innumerable Tranſgreſſions againſt him, which we all have been found guilty of? Come Friends, ſeeing then he is ſo ready to forgive us* (*upon a ſincere Repentance*) *all our former provocations; Let us therefore alſo forgive one another, be Reconciled unto, and at Peace one with another.*

IV. *As alſo we deſire it may be obſerved, that we plead for no other Unity, Peace, Concord or Reconciliation with any, but that which we believe to be conſiſtent with, and agreeable to the Truth, even that which the Holy Apoſtles exhorted all to endeavour after and to be found in, which is the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace. And that is both much more comprehenſive, and of greater weight, than many either underſtand, or would have it to be. This bleſſed Unity, &c. which ſtands in Righteouſneſs, we really deſire forever to Prize, and do value above and beyond all other Unities or Uniformi-*

Uniformities whatsoever, in which we are and hope ever to be in true Unity (in the Ground) with all the Faithful, Sincere and Upright hearted People of God every where.

V. *And we know that the True* Spiritual, *Invisible Fellowship and Communion of Saints (which consisteth in the Divine Light or Spirit of Christ Jesus) is not Confined to any External Visible Form,* &c. *For as* J. Hales *of* Eaton, *a Worthy and Learned Man well observes, that it is the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and not the Identity (or oneness) of Conceit which the Holy Ghost requires of at the Hands of Christians,* &c. *Concerning which much more might be said, but let this suffice for the present, having enlarged already far beyond what was first intended.* See his Golden Remains Pag. 49, 50.

The Reader is also desired to observe, that what is expressed in the aforesaid, concerning Heats, Animosities, Prejudices, &c. *one against another, only Relates to those amongst Friends and such places, where the Unhappy and sad Difference hath fallen out, as in this and some other parts.*

VI. *So shall Conclude all as in the Beginning of the Preface, with the Apostles advice ; Let all your things be done with Charity ; and follow after it. Concerning which one of the Antients spake very excellently : For unprofitably (saith he) hath he all, who wants that one (viz. Charity) whereby he should use all ; and how great is Love? for if that be wanting all other Graces lose their Grace ; but if present, all are profitable.* 1 Cor. 16. 14. and 14. 1.

VII. *And as we find the Holy Apostles did neither affect nor seek of Men Glory, neither, says* Paul, *to the believing* Thessalonians, *of you, nor yet of others ; neither at any time used we flattering words : So likewise he tells them, but we were Gentle amongst you, even as a Nurse Cherisheth her Children. And according to this their Practice they exhorted others as in,* Titus 3. 2. To speak evil of no Man, to be no Brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all Men. *And in* 2 Tim. 24. *It is said,* the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, Patient in Meekness, instructing those that opposed themselves ; &c. *nor must be self-willing, nor soon angry,* &c. *These Divine Blessed Qualifications ought all that profess to be Ministers, and followers of Christ Jesus to be Endowed with,* who should also walk worthy of the Vocation, unto which they are called, with all 1 Thes. 2. 5, 6. *Observe this well.*

 humbleness

humbleneſs of mind and meekneſs, and with Long-ſuffering and Patience, *&c.* Forbearing (*or as ſome read it* Supporting) one another through, or in Love.

THE END.

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